

STARS AND STRIPES®

Vick seeks to even score against Bucs

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Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick



Kiowas leaving Europe for new stateside home

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Troops seek conversion in holy land

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Palmer, left and Chaplain (1st Lt.) Dan Langston

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Free in Deployed Areas

U.S. aims to finish off Fallujah insurgents

Small-scale attacks increase in Mosul, other surrounding cities Page 3

Currency crunch

U.S. troops in Europe change their habits as they start to feel the financial pinch of the dollar's continued decline against the euro

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Red Sox fan death: The officer who fired a pepper-spray pellet that killed a woman in a raucous crowd of Red Sox fans was aiming at another fan but missed, police said Friday.

Police on Friday also identified the shooter, Officer Rochefort Milien.

In an update of its investigation into the death of Victoria Snelgrove, police said Milien fired his pepper-spray pellet gun at a fan during an Oct. 21 disturbance, but missed. The shot hit Snelgrove in the eye, fatally injuring her.

Victoria Snelgrove was not targeted; she was struck when the projectile missed its intended target, the statement said.

Milien is on paid injury leave from the department, a person close to the investigation told The Associated Press.

West Nile virus: After two record-breaking years of West Nile virus illnesses and deaths, the nation is experiencing a relatively mild season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

CDC data shows 2,282 people have been sickened by the mosquito-borne virus and 77 have died. This time last year, there were 8,219 illnesses and 182 deaths.

The virus went on to sicken 9,858 and kill 262 in 2003. There were 4,156 cases and 284 deaths in 2002.

The numbers of cases in 2002 and 2003 in the United States reflected the largest West Nile epidemics ever recorded, said Dr. Ned Hayes, a CDC West Nile expert.

John Hinckley Jr. outings: The relationship between John Hinckley Jr. and his former girlfriend needs more study before any decision is made about allowing the would-be assassin of President Reagan more time away from a mental hospital, government psychiatrists said Friday.

But Hinckley's therapist and a senior hospital psychiatrist said Hinckley has overcome the breakup and no longer poses a danger to himself or others.

Questions about Hinckley's relationship with Leslie deVeau — the former girlfriend — dominated the fourth day of a hearing on Hinckley's request to spend several days at a time away from St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, where he has lived since being found not guilty by reason of insanity in the 1981 shooting of Reagan and three others.

R. Kelly pepper spray case: An associate of rapper Jay-Z has been charged with blasting singer R. Kelly with pepper spray last month at a concert, authorities said Friday.

Tryan Smith was charged with third-degree assault, a misdemeanor, following a complaint filed by Kelly. Smith was ordered to appear in court on Dec. 7.

The charge is punishable by up to one year in prison.

A call to a spokeswoman for Jay-Z was not immediately returned.

Last week, Kelly sued Jay-Z for \$75 million, alleging the rapper used violence to force Kelly off their national tour.

Business

Disney labor dispute: Union officials representing 40 percent of Walt Disney World's 52,000-person work force asked a mediator to help them reach a contract with the company after a third proposal was rejected by workers who also authorized a strike, if necessary.



Morale booster: The Blue Angels take flight at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Fla., on Friday during an air show. Officials at Pensacola Naval Air Station, where the precision flying team is headquartered, hope the two-day show will boost morale at the base and among its neighbors in Florida's western Panhandle. The area was hit hard by Hurricane Ivan earlier this year. "This is a big thing," said resident Diana Hartley of the show. "It's like we're going to be back again. It means a lot. Pensacola's a great place to live."

Federal mediator Conrad Bowling planned to meet Monday at an Orlando hotel with Disney officials and leaders of the six unions that make up the Service Trades Council Union. The council's members Thursday rejected a contract proposal, for the third time, by a vote of 3,686 to 2,827.

Opponents of the contract proposal said the wage increases weren't enough to offset hikes in the cost of health insurance.

World

Ivory Coast violence: Frightened foreigners kept packing into Ivory Coast's international airport Saturday to be evacuated home, despite promises by President Laurent Gbagbo's government to protect them after a surge of anti-Western violence.

France, the West African nation's colonial ruler, and other countries have flown out more than 3,300 foreigners — including Americans — since Wednesday, embassy officials said, in what they expect will be one of the largest evacuations from Africa in post-independence times.

Gbagbo's office issued a statement late Friday urging foreigners to stay, saying it was taking steps to assure their safety. But after more than two years of intermittent civil war, many Westerners were skeptical of Gbagbo's assurances.

Chinese submarine intrusion: Japan and China should try to resolve their differences calmly, China's ambassador to Japan said Saturday, a day after Tokyo filed a protest with Beijing over the intrusion of a Chinese nuclear submarine.

The incident has strained relations between two of Asia's biggest economic and military powers.

Japanese officials protested to the Chinese Embassy on Friday after Tokyo determined that the submarine, which had entered territorial waters days earlier, belonged to China.

China has yet to respond but on Saturday, Chinese Ambassador Wang Yi urged the countries to work toward improving relations.

Nicaragua to destroy missiles: President Enrique Bolanos told U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld that Nicaragua

would completely eliminate a stockpile of hundreds of surface-to-air missiles with no expectation of compensation from the United States.

Bolanos said Friday that the anti-aircraft missiles would be destroyed within a year-and-a-half.

Nicaragua had 2,000 SA-7 missiles, which are portable weapons of Soviet design, left over from the Latin American country's days as a client of the Soviet Union. U.S. officials sought their destruction, fearing they could make their way into terrorist hands for use against airlines or military aircraft.

Haiti corruption probe: Haiti's interim prime minister said Friday that he is seeking a warrant against ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide amid allegations of corruption.

Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue said he asked Justice Minister Bernard Gousse to "issue a warrant against Aristide."

"It's something that should have been done a long time ago," Latortue told reporters at a news conference announcing the opening of the commission to investigate corruption.

It wasn't immediately clear whether officials planned to arrest Aristide on possible charges or detain him for questioning. It also was unclear whether such a warrant would be viable in South Africa, where Aristide is living.

1999 Russia apartment bombing: A suspect in a 1999 apartment-building bombing that killed 64 people and helped trigger Moscow's renewed military campaign in Chechnya was brought to Russia on Saturday after being arrested in the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, authorities said.

Magomed Salikhov is suspected of helping organize the attack in the Daghestani city of Buinaksk — one of four apartment-house blasts that Russian authorities cited as a reason to renew their military campaign in Chechnya.

Salikhov was detained in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, on Friday, Daghestani police spokeswoman Anzhela Matirosova said. NTV television showed Salikhov being led through a building in handcuffs. A date for his trial had not been set.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Official: 1,000 insurgents killed in Fallujah

10 Iraqis, 1 GI killed during Mosul unrest

By JIM KRANE

The Associated Press

FALLUJAH, Iraq — Backed by tanks and artillery fire, U.S. troops launched a major attack Saturday against insurgent holdouts in southern Fallujah, hoping to finish off resistance in what had been the major guerrilla bastion of central Iraq. An Iraqi official estimated that about 1,000 insurgents had been killed so far in the weeklong offensive.

In the northern city of Mosul, a car bomb exploded as an Iraqi National Guard convoy passed by, witnesses said. In recent days, an armed uprising in sympathy with Fallujah's insurgents has killed 10 Iraqi National Guards and one American soldier, the U.S. military said.

The region's governor blamed the uprising on "the betrayal of some police members" and said National Guard units arrived to help quell the violence. Also, a U.S. infantry battalion was diverted from Fallujah and sent back to Mosul.

Iraqi authorities requested reinforcements after police abandoned their posts. On Saturday, National Guardsmen, many of them ethnic Kurds, were seen patrolling parts of the city.

Insurgents appeared to be taking advantage of the lessening of American troop strength around Fallujah as U.S. commanders report an increase in small-scale rebel attacks.

On Saturday night, at least five heavy explosions rocked central Baghdad. Earlier, insurgents armed with rocket-propelled grenades attacked the Ministry of Education, a witness said. Iraqi police also clashed with militants.

Fallujah appeared engulfed in thick, black smoke as the latest U.S. attack began at midday Saturday amid the crackle of machine



AP photos

U.S. Marines of the 1st Division take position near a mosque in the western part of Fallujah, Iraq, on Saturday. About 1,000 insurgents have been killed in the operation to retake Fallujah, and about 400 wounded U.S. servicemen have been flown to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, hospital officials say.

guns and the flashes of fire from muzzles of American tanks arrayed around the city's southern rim. A single militant stood out against the blackened southern skyline.

About 1,000 insurgents had been killed and another 200 captured during the Fallujah operation, Iraq's national security adviser Qassem Dawoud said on national television.

"We are just pushing them against the anvil," said Col. Michael Formica, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade. "It's a broad attack against the entire southern front."

U.S. Marines in northern Fallujah were hunting for about a dozen insurgents dressed in National Guard uniforms after reports they were wandering the city.

"Any [Iraqi National Guard] or [Iraqi special forces] not seen with the Marines are to be considered hostile," Lt. Owen Boyce told his men.

Overnight, two city mosques were hit by airstrikes as troops reported sniper fire from inside. On Saturday, two Marines were killed by a homemade bomb southeast of Fallujah, raising the

American death toll in the operation to at least 24.

As the U.S. Army and Marines attacked inside Fallujah from the north, the Marines' 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion blocked insurgents from fleeing. U.S. officials estimate there are about 1,000-2,000 insurgents in the towns and villages around Fallujah who were not trapped inside the city during the U.S.-Iraqi siege, which began Monday.

U.S. officials said they hoped the latest surge would be the final assault on Fallujah, followed by a house-to-house clearing operation to search for boobytraps, weapons and guerrillas hiding in the rubble. U.S. and Iraqi officials want to restore control of Fallujah and other Sunni militant strongholds before national elections due by Jan. 31.

The fierce fighting has taken its toll on the Americans. More than 400 wounded soldiers have been taken to the U.S. military's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Associated Press reporters Edward Harris in Fallujah and Tim Tani, Sameer N. Yacoub, Marwan Fara, Sabah Jerges, Katarina Wroblewicz and Maggie Michael in Baghdad contributed to this report.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Friday, at least 1,170 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 903 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is higher than the Defense Department's tally, which was last updated Friday at 10 a.m. EST.

The British military has reported 74 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,032 U.S. military men and women have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 794 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ One soldier was killed Friday in an attack on a patrol in southern Baghdad.

■ One soldier was killed Thursday by small arms fire in Mosul.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Navy Petty Officer Third Class Julian Woods, 22, Jacksonville, Fla., killed by hostile fire Wednesday in Fallujah; assigned to 3rd Marine Division Detachment, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

■ Marine Cpl. Theodore A. Bowling, 25, Casselberry, Fla.; killed Thursday in Anbar province; assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Army Staff Sgt. Sean P. Huey, 28, Fredericktown, Pa.; died Thursday in Habaniya when an explosive detonated near his vehicle; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Greaves, Korea.

■ Army Spc. Thomas K. Doerflinger, 20, Silver Spring, Md.; killed by small arms fire Thursday in Mosul; assigned to 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), Fort Lewis, Wash.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Justin D. Reppuhn, 20, Hemlock, Mich.; killed Thursday in Anbar province; assigned to 3rd Light

Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Marine Cpl. Peter J. Giannopoulos, 22, Inverness, Ill.; killed Thursday in Babil province; assigned to Marine Corps Reserve's 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Chicago.

■ Marine Cpl. Romulo J. Jimenez II, 21, Miami; killed Wednesday in Anbar province; assigned to 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

■ Marine 1st Lt. Dan T. Malcom Jr., 25, Brinson, Ga.; killed Wednesday in Anbar province; assigned to 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Erick J. Hodges, 21, Bay Point, Calif.; killed Wednesday in Anbar province; assigned to 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Aaron C. Pickering, 20, Marion, Ill.; killed Wednesday in Anbar province; assigned to 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

■ Marine Staff Sgt. Gene Ramirez, 28, San Antonio; killed Wednesday in Anbar province; assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Army Pfc. Dennis J. Miller, Jr., 21, La Salle, Mich.; died Wednesday in Ramadi when a grenade struck his tank; assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 72nd Armor Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Casey, Korea.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Abraham Simpson, 19, Chino, Calif.; killed Tuesday in Anbar province; assigned to 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Marine Sgt. David M. Caruso, 25, Naperville, Ill.; killed Tuesday in Anbar province; assigned to 2nd Force Reconnaissance Company, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

■ Marine Cpl. Joshua D. Palmer, 24, Blandinsville, Ill.; died Monday in a non-hostile vehicle accident in Anbar province; assigned to the Marine Corps Reserve's 6th Engineer Support Battalion, 4th Force Service Support Group, Fort Ord, Ore.



Iraqis crowd around the scene of a car bomb aimed at Iraqi National Guard convoy in Mosul, Iraq, on Saturday.

U.S., Iraqi forces round up insurgents in Tikrit

BY STEVE LIEWER
Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MACKENZIE, Iraq—Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division's Task Force 1-18, working with local Iraqi National Guardsmen and police, have picked up 30 alleged insurgents and more than 60 weapons during a series of raids in and around Tikrit over the last two weeks, according to a Task Force Danger news release.

During operations called Mandarin Squeezes, Tangerine Pinch and Mustang Flex, the units searched about 900 houses in

Raids net more than 60 weapons as attacks continue in city

northern Tikrit and the neighboring villages of Umkashah and Abu Tuma. The release said the raids targeted financiers, weapons dealers and insurgents funded by Mohammed Al-Hadashi, Saddam Hussein's personal secretary, who has not been captured.

The soldiers also handed out about 200 job cards, entitling the recipient to a general labor job in the Tikrit Job Corps for six months.

Although it is Saddam's hometown, Tikrit has been relatively peaceful compared

to other parts of the restive "Sunni Triangle" patrolled by the 1st ID-led Task Force Danger.

During October, five insurgent attacks in Tikrit wounded four Americans and seven Iraqi soldiers or contractors. That compares with 19 attacks that killed four and wounded 38 in Baquba, a city patrolled by the 1st ID's 3rd Brigade, according to Task Force Danger statistics.

Insurgents have remained active as Ramadan reached its climax late last week and

the battle in Fallujah continued. The Danger sector, a West Virginia-sized area north of Baghdad, received 54 attacks by mortar, rocket, bomb and gunfire late Wednesday and Thursday, according to intelligence reports received by the task force's 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.

That was the most of any day since 1st ID took over the zone in March, topping the previous high set the day before.

E-mail Steve Liewer at: liewers@mail.esr.pentagon.mil



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Services members in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Internet cafe at Camp Scania, south of Baghdad, can access the Internet, voice-over-Internet phones or Web cams to communicate with friends and family back home. The computers will be getting a series of updates in the coming months.

Café computers to be updated

BY JULIANA GITTLER
Stars and Stripes

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq—In response to reports of unauthorized downloads and the introduction of viruses to Morale, Welfare and Recreation computers in Iraq, officials in charge of Internet cafes on U.S. bases here have changed the way some work function.

The Space and Naval Warfare Command in Europe, which supports 178 Internet cafes in Iraq, is also upgrading its service to give users better service and lower-cost, voice-over-Internet calls, according to the command.

SPAWAR is cloning Internet café computers across the country, making them identical. In the process, the technicians will also limit access to unauthorized sites, and change the way some computers download and upload data.

Users will be required to use memory sticks and other mini-drives through the USB port to upload and download data.

"This is to prevent unwanted materials [from] being inadvertently stored on a machine, which may affect its function," Klaus Krane, project group team leader for SPAWAR Europe, wrote in an e-mail.

Some locations continue to allow downloads, such as photos, but users must erase them immediately.

Next month, SPAWAR will launch a new system across Iraq that will improve bandwidth and service to MWRC computers.

"Due to the high customer usage and SPAWAR's desire to improve system performance, we developed a new solution which will increase the bandwidth and as a result will greatly improve system performance, increase Internet access speed and improve quality of phone calls," Krane wrote.

Using the computers

If instructions for uploads and downloads using a USB port are not posted in Internet cafes, users can contact the Space and Naval Warfare Command support office in Iraq at DNTV 302-550-0746 or commercial 240-336-0236 for help.

Cafes using the old service will reach the following site after logging on: www.cjtf7-mwr.net. The site describes the new system and explains how to use remaining prepaid phone account minutes.

Cafes that have made the transition will be set to the following Web page where users may find more information: <http://off.spaawareurope.net/>

The new system will also reduce costs to the military.

Although all locations should still allow downloads, soldiers in at least one location have had trouble doing so, according to a letter to Stars and Stripes. SPAWAR told the soldier in question that he should still be able to download using the USB ports once the new system is in place.

Troops currently using voice-over-Internet telephones will be able to transfer or refund their unused minutes.

The new service, expected to be in place in the next several weeks, will have a 20 percent lower per-minute cost, Krane said.

SPAWAR supports Internet cafes with computers, voice-over-Internet phones and Web cams. Commands at each location determine the total number of computers and Internet center lines, Krane said.

E-mail Juliana Gittler at: gittlerj@str.pentagon.mil

Pakistan army: Up to 40 militants killed

No trace of bin Laden near Afghan border

BY MATTHEW PENNINGTON
The Associated Press

WANA, Pakistan—Pakistan's army has demolished several "terrorist hideouts" and killed up to 40 militants in a major operation—but found no clue of Osama bin Laden's presence and failed to capture a former Guantanamo Bay prisoner accused of targeting security forces, officials said Saturday.

The troops took over some militant strongholds and seized a weapons cache during this

South Waziristan to capture "foreign miscreants" and Pakistani militant leader Abdullah Mehsud, said the army's field commander, Maj. Gen. Niaz Khatak.

"Our forces this week killed an estimated 30 to 40 militants in the areas of Mehsud," Khatak told journalists flowing into this tense tribal region by helicopter from Rawalpindi, a city south of the capital, Islamabad.

Islamabad is a key ally of the United States in its war on terror, and officials say hundreds of Central Asian, Afghan and Arab militants are in hiding in South Waziristan—also a possible hiding place of Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

However, Khatak said they had found no clues of the presence of bin Laden or his deputies in the area.

He said that they'd so far recovered only six militants' bodies, and that the operation was continuing in some areas where Mehsud and his men are believed to be on the run.

"There were about 500 to 600 foreign militants in South Waziristan when we launched the first major operation in March. Now, about 100 or so are left," he said. "The rest have either been captured, or killed or they have run away."

"The army will remain in South

Waziristan until each and every inch of the land is cleared of terrorists," he said, according to Pakistan's Geo television.

Pakistan has about 70,000 troops along the Afghan border, and has this year launched several military operations, leaving scores of soldiers, militants and civilians dead.

On Friday, a roadside bomb exploded near an army convoy in South Waziristan's main town, Wana, wounding at least four soldiers, said an intelligence official who did not want to be identified.

Wana residents said a shoot-out erupted shortly after the blast, leaving 18-year-old student Javed Iqbal dead and two others wounded. Residents accused the troops of the indiscriminate opening fire after the explosion.

Pakistan army spokesman Maj. Gen. Shaikat Sulaiman confirmed the explosion, but gave no other details.

Mehsud is accused of masterminding the kidnapping last month of two Chinese engineers in the tribal region near Afghanistan, where the engineers had been building a dam. One of the Chinese men was killed and the other was rescued by commandos.

Since then, troops have been looking for Mehsud, who was freed in March after about two years' detention at the U.S. prison for terror suspects at Guantanamo Bay.

After returning to Pakistan, Mehsud emerged as a rebel leader, opposing Pakistan's army as it hunts foreign militants and their supporters in the country's semi-autonomous tribal regions.

On Friday, Lt. Gen. Safdar Hussain, the top commander in northwestern Pakistan, said about 2,000 soldiers were involved in the latest operation, backed by artillery and helicopter gunships.

He vowed to keep going until the militants are killed or captured.

"The army will remain in South Waziristan until each and every inch of land is cleared of terrorists."

Maj. Gen. Niaz Khatak
Pakistan army

Army to get more armored Humvees for troops in Iraq

Official: 8,000 up-armored vehicles will be in Iraq by March

BY ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With no sign of the Iraq insurgency ending soon, the Army has again raised its goal for replacing regular Humvee utility vehicles in Iraq with armored Humvees, the Army's top civilian official said Friday.

The extra protection is needed to shield soldiers from the insurgents' weapon of choice, the roadside bomb, as well as other small arms that soldiers are vulnerable to in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq.

Les Brownlee, the acting secretary of the Army, said in an Associated Press interview that the Army recently doubled its re-

quirement for "up-armored" Humvees in Iraq from 4,000 to 8,000.

A Democratic member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, meanwhile, told reporters Friday after visiting U.S. troops in Iraq that he expects the insurgency to continue for some time.

Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., said in a conference call from Kuwait that the "climate of violence" in Iraq has increased.

"It's hard to determine whether that's the last gasp or building momentum, but the incidents are up," he said, adding that it seems the insurgents have the will to continue fighting despite getting routed in Fallujah.

"My sense is there's still a lot of fight left in the insurgents," Reed said.

"There are plenty of resources in terms of financial resources flowing to them."

Brownlee said that at the current production rate of 450 a month he believed the Army could meet the goal of having 8,000 armored Humvees in Iraq by March 2005.

He did not say how many already are there, but he said the goal of 4,000 was met in September.

In May 2003, after the fall of Baghdad but before it was clear to U.S. officials that an insurgency was developing, the Army had 235 armored Humvees in the country and they were being produced at a rate of 15 per month, Brownlee said.

By September, the requirement was raised to 1,000.

Brownlee said the Army also is adding armor to its truck fleet because soldiers in supply convoys are often attacked by insurgents. He said this was an illustration of how much more deadly the insurgency has proven to be than anyone in Washington believed possible in 2003.

"No one ever anticipated we'd be up-armor our truck fleet," he said.

"Nobody anticipated that we'd have to do that."



A Fallujah man cradles his 4-year-old son recovering from a head wound in the ICU unit of the 31st Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad on Wednesday. The child was wounded in Fallujah on Monday.

Wounded Iraqis in Fallujah to evacuate

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq's Health Minister said Saturday that the evacuation has begun of wounded civilians trapped inside Fallujah during the past four days of military operations.

In a released statement, Minister Alaa Alwan said that ambulances have begun transferring "significant numbers" of wounded to Baghdad hospitals. He did not specify how many.

On Friday, aid agencies including the Red Cross warned of a major humanitarian disaster unless Iraqi and U.S. authorities allow food, water and medicine to reach the trapped civilians in the besieged city.

Many of Fallujah's 200,000 to 300,000 residents fled the city before the assault, which began last Monday.

U.S. officials had estimated that 1,200 to 3,000 insurgents were barricaded in the city.

Dr. Shakir Al-Ainay, head of medical operations at the ministry, said that Fallujah General Hospital is ready to resume service.

The hospital was one of the first targets taken over by the Iraqi and American forces during the assault on Fallujah.

Despite some broken glass caused by mortar attacks, the hospital is "perfectly functional" and contains large quantities of medicines and usable medical supplies, he said.

Official: French hostages believed to be alive in Iraq

The Associated Press

PARIS — France believes that two journalists held hostage in Iraq are still alive, but authorities have lost direct contact with their kidnappers, the foreign minister said Saturday.

Reporters Christian Chesnot, 37, of Radio France Internationale, and Georges Malbrunot, 41, of the daily newspaper Le Figaro, disappeared Aug. 20 while driving to the Iraqi city of Najaf. Their Syrian driver, Mohammed al-Joundi, who also was abducted, was rescued Thursday by U.S. Marines in Fallujah.

Marines said al-Joundi told them he was separated from the journalists a month ago and had not seen them since.

Foreign Minister Michel Barnier said Paris did not know whether all three were together or separated until hearing the driver's account.

"We do not have direct contact

with the group that kidnapped Christian Chesnot [and] Georges Malbrunot," Michel Barnier told Europe-1 radio. "The situation in Iraq is extremely complex, difficult, dangerous."

The French government has been extremely lightfingered about its efforts to free the hostages, saying secrecy is essential for the men's safety and the success of any negotiations.

Al-Joundi's brother-in-law, Ali Merhebi, said Friday that France's Foreign Ministry told him last month that French officials had found a channel of direct contact with the group believed to have taken the men hostage.

The Foreign Ministry spokeswoman refused to confirm Merhebi's account.

Barnier did not specify Saturday when authorities had last communicated with the kidnappers, saying only: "We have had direct contact and we are trying to resume these contacts."

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More servicemembers being saved in Iraq

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq — The decision danced and floated in her consciousness like a butterfly on a summer day, always bouncing, always tempting, but never touching down.

It was there for weeks — months, even. Perhaps years.

But then Spc. Audrey Griffiths came to Iraq. And the decision came to earth.

On Friday, she stood waist-deep in the water at the outdoor pool on Logistical Support Area Anaconda and allowed Chaplain (1st Lt.) Dan Langston to grasp her firmly and dunk her — curls and all — beneath the surface of the cold, clear water.

When she emerged, spluttering and smiling, Griffiths, an administration specialist with the 319th Corps Support Battalion, had been baptized. She had placed her life in the hands of Christ.

"It was something I've been thinking about for a long time, but I wasn't actually able to come to a decision until I got here," said the 19-year-old.

Griffiths was one of eight soldiers baptized in the short ceremony beneath an overcast Iraqi sky. Others, too, said their decision was made easier here in this country, but not, perhaps, for the reason most obvious.

Jesus was not invited into their lives and asked to forgive them because they face the possibility of dying in this stubborn war. The daily rocket and mortar attacks did not anchor that decision for them.

"This is such a holy place, a biblical place," said Sgt. Randy Layne, 26, a mechanic with the 158th Aviation Regiment.

It was here between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers — the land once known as Mesopotamia — that Abraham walked. Some bibli-



RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Sgt. John Neal of the 82nd Engineer Battalion is dipped beneath the water by Chaplain (1st Lt.) Dan Langston at the outdoor swimming pool at Logistical Support Area Anaconda, Iraq, during a baptism service.

cal scholars believe the Garden of Eden was in this area.

Layne, in fact, had hoped to be baptized in the waters of the Tigris River, but his request was turned down.

Chaplains agree that the significance of the soldiers' reaching their decisions in this place is not related to the ongoing battle between the United States and their allies and the insurgents.

"I don't think being here in Iraq [as soldiers] has a major effect on our congregants," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Al Lowe, head chaplain for the 13th Corps Support Command and now deployed to Anaconda.

He doesn't think the very real chance of a scrape with mortality here is as much a factor as the troops' simply seeking a better way for themselves.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) R.J. Gore, chaplain for the 172nd Corps Support Group, agreed with his boss.

"I don't think it happens more frequently here than it does anywhere else," he said, discounting the danger as much of a motivator for the troops' decision.

"I've seen some troops wrestle with their relationship with Christ," he said, but they were having that struggle before they came to Iraq.

Lowe said individuals come to the decision in different ways.

"Some experience the road to Damascus moment and it happens — boom! — just like that," he said, a reference to the conversion of the Apostle Paul.

"Others, over a long period of time, are dealing with their spiritual needs and make a slow, conscious decision. There's no one way."

"There have been a number of Christian conversions here. I don't know how many."

Langston, a reservist who is a professor at Southwest Assemblies of God University in Waxahatchee, Texas, said the baptism is a public expression of the private decision made by the converts.

"We baptize them to show the decision has been made," he said before the ceremony. "This is the public commitment that I'm a Christian."

The immersion, common in the Protestant faith, he said, is a "huge object lesson." It symbolizes that Christ died, was buried and emerged again to enter heaven.

The eight soldiers did that, Langston said, by going under water and emerging.

He joked, saying anyone who goes under water but hasn't given their life to Christ is "just a wet sinner."

Spc. Gwendolyn Palmer, 34, of the 302nd Transportation Company was delivering in her wet clothes after her baptism, but it might not have been the chill in the air.

"My cup is running over," she said to explain her presence.

For her, too, the experience of being in Iraq, a place of biblical history and significance, boosted her decision to take the plunge.

"This is the Holy Land," she said, clutching a towel around her. "This is where we came from."

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Early visit from Santa Claus



RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Spc. Amy Barnes, left, and Sgt. Collietta Bassett of the 380th Medical Company at Logistical Support Area Anaconda, Iraq, met Santa Claus on Saturday at the Anaconda post exchange. When not making children of all ages smile, Santa is known as Mike Lord, a telecommunications specialist with the 54th Signal Battalion at Camp Doha, Kuwait. He lives near Atlanta.

Ex-Iraq policy director chided over incident

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Robert Blackwill, former White House director of postwar policy in Iraq, was chided by national security adviser Condoleezza Rice after a woman claimed he grabbed her arm and was verbally abusive at a Kuwait airport, administration officials said Friday.

The alleged incident occurred as Blackwill, a former ambassador to India, was trying to return to the United States to campaign with President Bush, the administration officials said. They said the alleged incident was not related to Blackwill's decision last week to step down.

A secretary for the U.S. embassy in Kuwait says Blackwill, after learning he was not on a flight manifest, grabbed and bruised her arm while insisting he be allowed on board, according to the White House officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because there was no personnel matter. Blackwill denies touching her, officials said.

The woman never filed a formal complaint, and others who were present offered conflicting accounts of what happened, they said.

The incident came to light after officials at the State Department in Washington learned of it and informed Rice.

Photographs of the woman's arm were sent to the State Department, the officials said. After learning about the allegation, Rice chided Blackwill, telling him he should have walked away and avoided a confrontation. One of the administration officials said there was no personnel matter but that Blackwill was talked to about what had happened.

White House press secretary Scott McClellan downplayed the flap and praised Blackwill's service.

"Ambassador Blackwill has served the nation with honor and distinction, and the president and Dr. Rice greatly appreciate his service," McClellan said Friday. "I think I'll leave it at that."



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Impact of dollar's decline starting to be felt

Euro's strength makes off-post shopping seem less attractive

BY JASON CHUDY
Stars and Stripes

The recent drop in the dollar's value against the euro is hitting many people below the belt — in their wallets, and even in their stomachs.

The dollar's decline is forcing many Americans living in Europe to change their shopping, dining and even travel habits.

"It's terrible, it's bleak," said Sgt. 1st Class Alexie Rogers of the 26th Area Support Group in Heidelberg, Germany, lamenting the dollar's downward slide. "These days I really have to budget and limit my spending off base."

The strong euro has discouraged many military members, such as 1st Lt. Dorian Hatcher of the 71st Corps Support Group in Bamberg, Germany, from eating out on the economy.

"I stay on post more now than I used to," Hatcher said. "If you go out to a local restaurant, you're going to have to pay more, but you get used to it."

"I went to Burger King the other day, and my order came out to \$6.75," Hatcher said. "I gave them 5 euros and got change."

Since its historic peak in July 2001, when the euro was worth only 84 U.S. cents, the dollar has decreased in value to an all-time low last week, when a euro cost about \$1.30.

The euro itself didn't become an actual currency until January 2002, but exchange rates for many existing European currencies had been pegged to the rate since January 1999. So the dollar's exchange rates for lire, deutschmarks, drachmas, francs and pesetas in those three years changed according to the value of the euro.

And since the euro's physical arrival, the dollar has consistently been dropping in value.

As a result, the Naples Navy Exchange has seen a small increase in business. According to an e-mail to Stars and Stripes, because "high prices out in town have made shopping [at the exchange] attractive."

AAFES, on the other hand, doesn't think that the decline has increased its business much. AAFES Europe spokeswoman Debbie Byerly wrote in an e-mail to Stars and Stripes that though they've also seen a slight increase in business, they won't attribute it to the dollar's drop.

"Much can be attributed to large troop deployments and redeployments, both [of] which cause sales spikes," she wrote. "Recent large expansions and renovations, such as the new mini-mall at Aviano, increase sales through customer satisfaction and improved convenience, as well as expanded stock assortments."

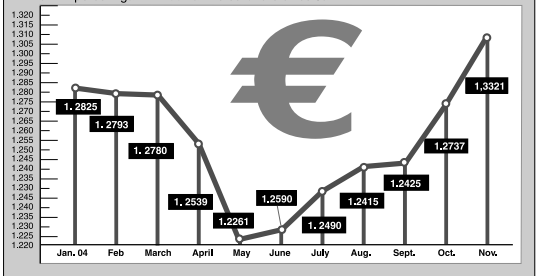
Customers also differ on whether



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY RAYMOND T. CONNOR/Stars and Stripes

Gaining strength

For the past six months, the euro has been gaining strength against the dollar. Twelve months ago, it took \$1.19 to buy 1 euro. Today, it takes \$1.33 to buy 1 euro, an 11 percent gain. A look at the euro rate since Jan. 1.



PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes

the dollar affects their exchange shopping habits.

Walking out of the Heidelberg PX last week, Rogers bought his wife a new pair of \$49 suede boots.

"This is a prime example," he said, holding up the bag of shoes.

"Usually, I'd be looking off base for something like this, and the PX would be my second or third option. Now, it's pretty much the only option."

Sgt. 1st Class Jody Schroeder, with the 1st Personnel Command, got to Europe in August.

"We really haven't been here long enough to notice the difference," he said.

When he and his wife wanted to buy some new furniture they looked on base and off, and ultimately bought off base.

"We always eat off base," said the father of four. But he knows living on base keeps his paycheck more stable.

"I've got friends at work who check the exchange rates almost daily to time when they should pay rent or utilities or other bills," he said.

But those who shop for special items that they can't get at the exchange will continue to fork over their more-expensive Euro for these products.

"It really has had no effect on me," said Capt. Stephen Leonard, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7th Corps Support Group. "There are certain things I get off post, like European foods and auto parts, that I will continue to buy off post."

Family member Nicole Holland, from Company B, 82nd Engineer Battalion, said the surging euro hasn't stopped her from shopping off post, but she has noticed the rising rates at the ATM.

"It's discouraging when you have to spend more money, but it really hasn't affected how much I shop off post," she said. "I do a lot of shopping downtown, and get all my produce on the economy. You really notice it when you take money out of the ATM to pay your phone bill. That's painful."

The shoe-shopping Rogers is feeling the pinch in other ways, too. Avid travelers since they first moved to Europe four years ago, Rogers and his wife haven't taken a trip in more than a year.

"It's too expensive," he said. "I'm just glad we live in base housing. The folks who live off base are the ones really feeling the pinch."

Military members overseas are

given a cost-of-living allowance based on their pay grades, years of service and number of family members.

The allowance, according to the DOD Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee's Web site, is designed to "equalize purchasing power between members overseas and their [U.S.-based] counterparts."

About 320,000 military members in 600 overseas locations receive a cost of living allowance. But the money only goes so far.

Last December, a married E-7 without children in Naples, Italy, received \$980.12.

This November, the same chief petty officer is expected to receive about \$1,125 based on today's COLA rate. If he had two children, he'd receive about \$1,300.

Charles Ragland is one of those who lives off base and doesn't receive a military cost of living allowance. A retired DOD's principal, Ragland said his rent has gone up by about \$300 a month because of the dollar's nose dive.

"It's killing me," he said. To cut costs, Ragland said he doesn't eat out as much and shops more on base.

SEE EURO ON PAGE 9

Experts: Rate woes could cost military

BY TERRY BOYD
Stars and Stripes

BAUMHOLDER, Germany — For soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen living overseas, the near-record decline of the dollar's buying power is far more than a historical footnote.

It's day-to-day reality. "It's a terrible situation for Americans living overseas," earning dollars, but making purchases or paying bills in foreign currencies, said Michael L. Levy, a Vancouver, British Columbia-based currency analyst.

Americans in Europe have lost 30 percent of their buying power during the dollar's two-year decline against the euro, for example, only slightly offset by cost-of-living adjustments, said Levy, executive vice president of Custom House Global Foreign Exchange, North America's largest independent currency brokerage.

Since December 2003, the South Korean won's value rose by about 8 percent against the dollar as of early November. Japan's yen has risen by about 1.2 percent; the British pound 4.12 percent.

And there's no end in sight, many analysts say.

The cost of living overseas is becoming so great that it may have an adverse effect on the U.S. military, according to F. Trenery Dolbear Jr., the Clinton S. Durling professor of economics at Brandeis University International Business School in Boston.

"There may simply come a point where U.S. personnel can't afford to live in expensive places and [then] make a decision to get out," Dolbear said.

Though the Bush administration has proposed a major drawdown of U.S. forces in Europe, the United States still will have a sizable presence in Germany, as well as at NATO commands across Europe and in Turkey.

If the dollar keeps falling, the Department of Defense may have to provide additional financial incentives, above COLAs, to convince people to live in expensive places, Dolbear said.

Why does no one want to buy U.S. dollars right now? It boils down to too many of them floating around.

The main problem the U.S. economy — and, by extension, the dollar — faces is that the federal government is spending more than it's taking in a lot more, to the tune of a \$4.2 trillion national debt.

SEE DOLLAR ON PAGE 9

Euro: Feeling the impact

EURO, FROM PAGE 8

And as bad as the exchange rate for euros has become, Ragland said he was blown away at what the dollar bought in England during a recent trip to the UK. "I couldn't believe it," he said. "It was really, really expensive."

That's left many looking for deals to cheaper destinations.

When Spc. Saun Norwood with the 596th Maintenance Company based in Wiesbaden, Germany, got back from Iraq this summer, he shopped around until he found a bargain all-inclusive four-day trip to Spain for 340 euros.

"I try to be frugal," said Norwood, who drove to Heidelberg to shop at the PX and eat at the on-base TGIF Fridays. "It's frustrating that traveling has become so expensive, but you only have so long in Europe. You just have to do it."

For many servicemen returning from long deployments to the Middle East, the desire to travel home outweighs the dollar's decline.

"We had more business than last year," said Herbert Blessinger, owner of ABC Travel in Germany. "All the time in wartime, I've noticed that our business goes up. Soldiers who are coming back to Germany [from downrange] want to go to the States to visit their family there. This has led to an increase in business for the travel industry here."

Reporters Rick Emert and Jon R. Anderson contributed to this story.

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Dollar: No end seen to dollar's decline

DOLLAR, FROM PAGE 8

The federal government's operating budget deficit — the difference between what the government spends and what it is taking in — is about \$450 billion, 44 percent of which is financed by Asian investors, mostly in Japan and China, Levy said.

Foreign governments are covering that gap by buying U.S. government securities — buying American debt in exchange for a guaranteed return on that investment.

On top of a federal operating deficit, there's a huge current account deficit of about \$600 billion, Levy said. That's the difference between the dollars flowing out of America in purchases of tennis shoes, clothing and electronics, for example, and the money flowing back in from the sales abroad of American-made goods.

With the current account deficit, "basically foreign governments are keeping the ball rolling by buying our debt," Dolbear said.

So what does the future hold? Each expert interviewed by Stars and Stripes prefaced his remarks with the caveat, "Anything can happen." And certainly there are infinite variables that can affect the value of the dollar.

Some variables, like the Bush administration's desire to make \$1.85 trillion in tax cuts permanent, could hurt if those cuts further inflate the operating deficit.

American products priced in dollars will be a better bargain and U.S. exports should rise, "but that happens very slowly. That's not going to bail us out," Dolbear said.

Interest rate hikes could help, luring dollars from overseas, Levy said. But lower interest rates are good for people living in

the States who are making big-ticket purchases, such as cars or appliances.

All experts consulted by Stripes agreed that if any measures could cause the dollar to reverse course, it would be the Bush administration making significant inroads at reducing the operating deficit.

"But it's not the design of this administration to change the way things are going," Levy said.

For the foreseeable future, the Bush administration is happy with the dollar's decline because it provides a built-in discount when paying back government debt, while boosting U.S. exports, the experts said.

"The government is quite content to let the dollar drop at least till there's a lot of hurting and screaming goes on," said Terry Joyce, vice president, head of foreign exchange marketing, Regions Financial Corp.

Europe is hurting the most, with the dollar depressing sales of goods for economies, particularly Germany's, that are seeing low growth and low consumer confidence, said Joyce and others.

Foreign governments and trade and financial institutions might begin putting downward and economic pressure on the Bush administration to change its weak dollar policy. The rise of the euro against the

dollar has been "brutal" and "unwelcome," Jean-Claude Triche, president of the European Central Bank, said this month according to news reports.

Japan and China own about 44 percent of the U.S. deficit. With the dollar dropping, "at what point do these investors say they don't want to buy more U.S. debt?" Levy said. Or, he added, will they be content to try to make up the shortfall by selling us finished goods?

"The government is quite content to let the dollar drop at least till there's a lot of hurting and screaming goes on."

Terry Joyce

Vice president,

head of foreign exchange marketing, Regions Financial Corp.

Alas, the experts see a greater chance of the dollar dropping further over the long haul.

Joyce said he sees little chance of the dollar returning to parity with the euro over the next two years.

Levy sees some good news on the horizon in the form of a "quite significant correction" in the value of the dollar, "possibly as much as 10 percent."

But, said Levy and others, sooner or later, the dollar will resume its fall if neither the American consumer nor the Bush administration changes spending habits.

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Sgt. Luis Scheker, 28, of the 601st Cavalry Support Detachment, reaches for a tool while working on the engine of an OH-58 Kiowa Warrior from Troop F of the 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment at Forward Operating Base MacKenzie near Samarra, Iraq. He is one of about 400 soldiers who will have to leave Europe next year when the 1st Infantry Division and 1st Armored Division leave their OH-58s to the Hawaii-based 25th Infantry Division and the New York-based 10th Mountain Division.



One OH-58 Kiowa Warrior rests on the tarmac, foreground, while a second spools up its engine for a test run at Forward Operating Base MacKenzie. The cavalry unit eventually will receive an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle to replace the Kiowa Warriors' eye-in-the-sky capability.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 W. Lance Johnson, 29, an OH-58 Kiowa Warrior pilot, inspects the gun mount on his helicopter. Johnson said the move from Europe will be a little disappointing. "But I'm going to Hawaii afterward, so that made the pain a little more bearable," he said.

Kiowas fly into the sunset

Europe's OH-58 helicopters soon to be sent to stateside units, leaving some soldiers nostalgic

BY STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MACKENZIE, Iraq — Europe is about to see the last of its workhorse air scouts, the OH-58 Kiowa Warriors.

As part of its 2002 aviation transformation plan, the Army is transferring the 1970s-vintage reconnaissance helicopters from cavalry units in heavy divisions such as the Germany-based 1st Infantry and 1st Armored divisions to beef up OH-58 squadrons elsewhere.

It's a part of the larger plan to reorganize divisions into brigade-sized "units of action."

This spring, the 1st AD's 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment will pack up its Kiowas, based in Bidingen, Germany, and ship them back to the United States. The 1st ID's 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment's birds will be wrapped up and shipped to the States when the division's yearlong deployment to Iraq ends late this winter.

"There are a lot of us that have kind of grown up in the cavalry units. We're a family," said Maj. Michael McCurry, 37, of Mountain Home, Idaho, the 1/4 Cavalry's deputy squadron commander. "It's a sad moment for those of us who have cut our teeth that way."

"It's the end of an era."

The job of the small, fast OH-58s is surveillance, using a mast-mounted "eye" above its main rotor. The system includes a heat-imaging sensor, television camera, laser range finder and optical bore-sight system, according to the private defense Web site globalsecurity.org.

But the Kiowas also can carry a 50-caliber machine gun, rockets or missiles. The 1/4 Cavalry has found them useful in combat to flush out hidden pockets of insurgents or chase and destroy enemy trucks.

The unit has awarded 15 combat Air Medals to Kiowa Warrior pilots, including five with valor, said Capt. Nathan Springer, the squadron's personnel officer. One pilot — Chief Warrant Officer 3 Almos Irbly, 36, of Neptune, N.J. — has earned two valor awards.

After they are shipped stateside, the helicopters will be reconditioned. Most will then be sent to the Kiowa Warrior fleets of two light-infantry divisions: the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y.

In late spring, Troops D, E and F of the two cavalry squadrons will cease their colors for the last time and be deactivated. Almost all of their 400 personnel will scatter to stateside units.

That's tough news for Chief Warrant Officer 2 W. Lance Johnson, 29, of Brookeville, Md., a pilot with

1/4 Cavalry's Troop D, whose Germany tour started just a few weeks before the unit flew to Iraq. He'd been looking forward to sightseeing in Europe.

"It's a little disappointing," he said. "But I'm going to Hawaii afterward, so that made the pain a little more bearable."

While most pilots have been given their next duty assignments, the enlisted personnel have no idea where they'll be going. They are eager to find out.

"Usually in the military, everything's planned out so far in advance," said Sgt. Luis Scheker, 28, of Kissimmee, Fla., a Kiowa Warrior mechanic in the 601st Cavalry Support Battalion, which is also affected by the move.

"In the [OH-58] community, it's pretty much chaos — controlled chaos."

For a time, the reorganization will leave division cavalry units without any eyes in the sky.

"It takes away a really good, integral capability that the squadron commander has now," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Michael Nelson, 46, of Columbus, Ohio, and the 1/4 Cavalry's flight operations officer. "They lose their eyes out forward. That's the premise of the mission."

Later, though, the cavalry unit will add an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle platoon. The radio-controlled aircraft is equipped with a camera that can fly high and quietly, McCurry said, without putting pilots at risk, all advantages over the aging Kiowas.

But, he acknowledged, it is not a perfect replacement.

"When you're looking through a UAV [camera] feed, it's like looking through a straw," he said. "The UAV is never going to be able to replace the living, thinking, breathing pilot who has 360-degree situational awareness."

Pilots and soldiers in the 1/4 Cavalry's air wing are philosophical about the loss of their unit.

"It's a sign of things to come," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Greg Koch, 35, of Cheyenne Wells, Colo., a Troop D pilot. "I think it'll be a more efficient use of helicopters in the Army, with the new unit structure."

"I'll just turn a wrench somewhere else," Staff Sgt. Max Cerna, 25, of Elmdar Park, N.J., a Troop F mechanic, said with a shrug.

Sgt. 1st Class Norris Wrenn of Troop E is a bit more nostalgic.

"The aircraft going away, it's like breaking up a family," said Wrenn, 38, of Hampton Va.

But Capt. Dale Bond of Troop D is glad the Kiowas' last cavalry mission is a combat one.

"It's sad to leave Germany, because it's such a great duty station," said Bond, 24, of Pensacola, Fla. "But it's going to be more memorable, knowing that you ended it like this, doing what you were trained to do."

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PHOTOS BY STEVE LIEWER/Stars and Stripes

Capt. Dale Bond, 24, a Kiowa Warrior pilot with the 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment's Troop D, catches a few winks on the tarmac next to some of the birds.

IN THE STATES

Bush renews call for Palestinian statehood

By BARRY SCHWEID

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush has all but abandoned his goal of Palestinian statehood next year, opting instead to spend the next four years trying to help "a truly free state develop" alongside Israel.

Politely stepping around European and Arab demands that he plunge right into Middle East peace-making now that Yasser Arafat has departed from the scene, Bush made clear he is in no hurry.

After all, Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Arab television network Al-Arabiya, "it would be a little hard for him to say 'And there will be one in one year, two years, three years, four years,' because it is truly up to the parties."

After meeting at the White House on Friday with British



Bush



Blair

Sets tough conditions for Middle East

Prime Minister Tony Blair, his ally in Iraq, Bush offered no timetable — nor even a sketchy plan — for hastening Palestinian statehood, saying, "I hate to put artificial time frames on things."

"I think it is impossible to think that the president of the United States or the prime minister of

Great Britain can impose our vision," Bush said.

Time is on Bush's side here.

For one thing, peace-making was already at a virtual standstill while Arafat

alive. For another, Palestinians need to hold elections to choose permanent leaders within 60 days, so their emergence would be gradual.

Also, Israel is not in a rush either. Prime Minister Ariel

Sharon will plot his way according to whether Mahmoud Abbas, the new head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and other international Palestinian leaders can impose order.

"There is a two-state solution based on the fact that they have to first stop terrorism before there is a state," Sharon's spokesman, Raanan Gissin, said in reaction to Bush's remarks. "The fact is that there is a new era now. He (Bush) is urging them to drop the Yasser Arafat legacy."

Even the goal of holding a conference with European and other leaders to develop a strategy will not be achieved immediately, analysts say.

"In the first four years, President Bush put the entire onus on the Palestinians and was unwilling to do much to help them. It is unclear whether that has changed," said Brookings Institution analyst Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel and a former assistant secretary of state.

"On the one hand, recognizing

Analysis

there is an opportunity, saying he is prepared to exert his capital, which is very important," Indyk said. "On the other hand, he still made clear that the ones who were going to be on the Palestinians to build democracy."

Judith Kipper, director of the Middle East Forum at the Council on Foreign Relations, said if the Palestinians have an elected president by the middle of January and can maintain a cease-fire and appoint a new and more functional government, they could demand negotiations with Israel and have the support of the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and Russia.

James Phillips, Middle East analyst at the Heritage Foundation, said it would take months, if not years, for the Palestinians "to get their own house in order and crawl out of the hole Arafat dug for them."

"They need to make a clean break from his disastrous legacy of terrorism, and until they do,

there is little chance of genuine peace," Phillips said in an interview.

Powell expects to meet with new Palestinian leaders soon, with discussions ongoing about time and place, a senior State Department official said Friday. One option is to tack a trip to the Middle East onto one of two extensive trips that Powell already has planned, the official said on condition of anonymity.

Not ruled out is having the Palestinian leaders come to Washington, though that's not considered likely, the official said.

Sharon is sending his foreign minister, Silvan Shalom, to Washington to meet with Powell on Monday to compare notes.

Edward S. Walker, former U.S. ambassador to Egypt and Israel, said he does not think Bush is ready to move on Palestinian statehood.

"He just found an other reason for not moving," said Walker, president of the Middle East Institute. "He twisted and turned when asked whether he could do it in four years, and he didn't give any concrete evidence he is ready to do anything positive."

Barry Schweid is a diplomatic correspondent for The Associated Press.



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Cheney to undergo tests after having trouble breathing

By DEB RIECHMANN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Vice President Dick Cheney, who has a history of heart trouble, was having tests at a hospital Saturday after experiencing some shortness of breath, a White House spokesman said.

"On the recommendation of his doctors, the vice president is going to George Washington University Hospital for some tests," spokesman Ken Lisais said.

"He experienced some shortness of breath Saturday morning and has had a bad cold, which could be the cause for the shortness of breath."

President Bush was notified, Lisais said.

Cheney's cardiologist, Dr. Jonathan Reiner, was to oversee the tests.

The 63-year-old Cheney has had four heart attacks, although none as vice president. He kept up a heavy travel schedule during Bush's re-election campaign, often traveling with his wife, Lynne Cheney.

Lisais said Cheney is taking every precaution "as anyone with history should do" and is having himself checked out. It was unclear whether Cheney would be admitted to the hospital, or would be there only for tests.

In June 2001, he had a pacemaker implanted in his chest. At his annual heart checkup on May 11, doctors determined that the pacemaker, called an implantable cardioverter defibrillator, was working fine and never had to assist his heart.

The device is designed to activate automatically if needed to regulate the patient's heartbeat.

Ahead of the fall presidential campaign, Cheney dismissed speculation that his health might keep him from running again with Bush.

He said his health had been good and that he could not think of any circumstances that would prompt to decline the role.

"He's asked me to serve again and I'll be happy to do that," Cheney said in March.

His first heart attack occurred in 1978, when he was 37. He had a second in 1984, and after suffering his third heart attack, in 1988, Cheney had quadruple bypass surgery to clear clogged arteries. On Nov. 22, 2000, Cheney suffered what doctors called a "very slight" heart attack and had an angioplasty to open a clogged artery.

Cheney was back in the hospital on May 5, 2001, after complaining of chest pains. Doctors performed another angioplasty to reopen the same artery.

Peterson guilty on two counts of murder

BY BRIAN SKOLOFF
The Associated Press

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. — Scott Peterson's lawyers failed to persuade the jury that someone else killed his pregnant wife. Now, they'll try to persuade the same 12 people to spare him from the death penalty.

But Peterson himself is unlikely to take the stand and beg for mercy, doing that would require him to admit to the murders, and throw away any chance of overturning the convictions on appeal.

Six men and six women convicted Peterson on Friday of the first-degree murder of his wife, Laci, and the second-degree murder of the fetus she was carrying. The couple had planned to name their son Connor. The jury also agreed on a "special circumstance" that calls for capital punishment — namely that he killed another person (the fetus) while committing a felony (the intentional and premeditated killing of his wife).

Judge Alfred A. Deluchi sent them home until Nov. 22, and urged them to avoid news coverage of the case until the penalty phase begins. During this next stage, the defense and prosecution will present exonerating and mitigating factors in hopes of swaying the jury's decision. The jury will begin deliberating the former fertilizer salesman's fate on Nov. 30, and be sequestered again until they reach a decision.

The verdicts provided a made-for-cable-TV conclusion to a case that has captivated the nation since Laci Peterson disappeared 23 months ago. Prosecutors portrayed the murders as a restless husband's cold-blooded attempt to escape marriage and fatherhood for the plea-

Jury must now decide if he'll get death penalty or life in prison

asures of the bachelor life.

Scott Peterson, 32, stared straight ahead, then looked at each of the jurors as they were polled to confirm their decisions.

Serious and unsmiling, none appeared to return his gaze.

Laci Peterson's mother, Sharon Rocha, sobbed. Laci's friends in the gallery cried, and loud sighs could be heard across the courtroom. As the courtroom emptied, throngs of well-wishers clapped and cheered. Gwendolyn Kempe, a distant relative of Rocha, was crying and shaking, saying, "We're just elated."

Outside the courthouse, it was pandemonium — roars went up from the crowd of about 1,000 with each verdict. In Modesto, drivers honked their horns, and others shouted with satisfaction when the news broke on television. Well-wishers descend-

ed on Laci's home, leaving notes and flowers.

Laci Peterson's family avoided the throng by leaving through an underground parking garage, but Scott Peterson's family faced the crowds outside the front door of the courthouse. As police rushed them away, someone in the crowd booed Jackie Peterson, Scott's mother. Someone else shouted "SHE didn't kill her!"

The families, lawyers and others directly involved in the case remain under a gag order until Peterson's sentence is determined.

Defense attorney Mark Geragos, who was in Los Angeles when the verdict was announced, did not disclose whether his client plans to appeal.

The verdicts came after a little more than



Above: Chief Deputy District Attorney Birgit Fladager, center, and Prosecutor Rick Distaso, right, leave the courthouse in Redwood City, Calif., on Friday after the jury handed down a guilty verdict in the Scott Peterson trial. Left: Dana Titus of Pleasanton, Calif., reacts to the first-degree murder verdict. Peterson was also convicted of second-degree murder of the couple's fetus.

seven hours of deliberation by the final 12 jurors, following a five-month trial and a chaotic final week. The judge removed two jurors for reasons that have not been publicly disclosed.

Prosecutors said Scott Peterson killed his 27-year-old wife in their Modesto home on Dec. 23 or Dec. 24, 2002, and then drove his boat and her body 90 miles west and dumped it in San Francisco Bay.

The substitute teacher was eight months pregnant when she vanished.

Four months later, her remains and those of her fetus washed up just north of the marina where Peterson launched his fishing boat the day of her disappearance.

Police never were able to establish exactly when, how or where Laci died, the circumstantial evidence proved persuasive.

Peterson never took the stand.

CIA deputy retires amid internal unrest

BY KATHERINE
PFLEGER SHRADDER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — John McLaughlin, who took temporary command of the CIA for three months this year during a wave of criticism of the spy agency, is retiring amid internal conflicts.

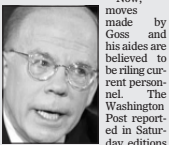
In a statement Friday, McLaughlin, the CIA's deputy director and 32-year agency veteran, called his departure a "purely personal decision" and said it was time to move on to other endeavors.

But former intelligence officials in touch with current agency personnel say there has been turmoil in recent weeks as new CIA Director Porter Goss tried to make changes and get settled in.

Goss, a Florida Republican who formerly chaired the House Intelligence Committee, brought four of his congressional aides with him to the CIA's 7th floor executive offices shortly after he took over in September.

But tension began to be air-

torate of Operations "needs fixing." The bill warned that without changes, the clandestine unit — the agency's most famous division — could become a "stilted bureaucracy incapable of even the slightest bit of success."



McLaughlin

Operations Stephen Kappes turned in his resignation Friday following a tense meeting at CIA headquarters in suburban Virginia.

Goss and White House officials asked Kappes to reconsider his decision over the weekend, the newspaper said. Other officials are also considering leaving.

An intelligence official reached late Friday declined to comment.

McLaughlin temporarily took over the CIA in July when Tenet

retired, also citing personal reasons.

McLaughlin's ascension put him in line to field criticism from two reports highly critical of U.S. intelligence operations, the Sept. 11 Commission report and the Senate's investigation into the flawed prewar intelligence on Iraq.

President Bush decided in August to nominate a permanent replacement for Tenet and tapped Goss, who was a CIA operative during the 1960s.

Officials painted McLaughlin's decision to retire from government as a natural one. A CIA official said McLaughlin thought the period of government transition after the election was a "logical time to move on." McLaughlin plans to take time off while considering opportunities in the private sector, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Since 1972, McLaughlin has advanced within the agency to become a part of its senior leadership. He was an analyst for European and Russian issues before rising to deputy director for intelligence in 1997. By 2000, he had become Tenet's right hand, as deputy director of central intelligence.

Source: Education Secretary Paige plans to leave Cabinet

BY BEN FELLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Education Secretary Rod Paige, whose tenure has been defined by the big-est school law in a generation, plans to leave his job, a Bush administration official says.

"The secretary has been looking at leaving and he's been in discussion with the White House about the right time to do so," said the official, who spoke Friday on the condition of anonymity because Paige has not formally resigned.

The leading candidate to replace Paige is Margaret Spellings, President Bush's domestic policy adviser who helped shape his school agenda when he was the Texas governor. Spellings has a keen interest in schools and may want the Cabinet-level education job.

White House press secretary

Scott McClellan declined to speculate about the position.

Paige, the nation's seventh education secretary, is the first black person to serve in the job. He grew up in segregated Mississippi and built a career on a belief that education equalizes opportunity, moving from college dean and school superintendent to education chief.

Paige is content to move on after overseeing Bush's aggressive education agenda for four years, said the administration official, who has spoken to him about his plans.

Paige, 71, has been an outspoken defender of No Child Left Behind, the law at the center of Bush's domestic agenda.

The law, which aims to get all children up to grade level in reading and math, has faced sustained criticism from state and school leaders who say they need more money and support. But Paige says schools are showing improvement among students who have long been overlooked.

Paige would be the third member of the Bush Cabinet to make plans to leave since the president won a second term. Attorney General John Ashcroft and Commerce Secretary Don Evans also are departing.



Paige

Airlines ordered to turn over passenger data



A Transportation Security Administration worker, left, watches a man taking off shoes at a check point in Terminal C at the Logan International Airport in Boston on Tuesday.

BY LESLIE MILLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Even though the move was expected, civil libertarians are protesting a directive by the government ordering airlines to turn over personal information on their customers that can include credit card numbers and addresses and even indicate a traveler's religion.

Under the system, called "Secure Flight," the Transportation Security Administration will screen for possible terrorists by comparing passenger data with names on two government lists. The "no-fly" list comprises known or suspected terrorists, while a "watch" list names people who should face tighter scrutiny before boarding planes.

The TSA order issued Friday gives 72 airlines until Nov. 23 to turn over computerized data for

passengers who traveled on domestic flights during June.

The data — known as passenger name records, or PNR — can include credit card numbers, travel itineraries, addresses, telephone numbers and mail requests. The latter can indicate a passenger's religion or ethnicity.

Barry Steinhardt, an American Civil Liberties Union lawyer, said a major problem is the lists include the names of many people who are not security risks.

Among those subjected to extra scrutiny in recent months was Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass. The singer formerly known as Cat Stevens, now Yusuf Islam, is trying to get off the no-fly list after he was removed from a London-to-Washington flight because the list said he had links to terrorists.

The lists are "a hodgepodge of

information, accurate and inaccurate," Steinhardt said. "They're the basement of the program, and the floor is rotten."

The government has sought to improve its process for checking passengers since the Sept. 11, 2001, hijackers exposed holes. The government's first attempt was scuttled because of fears the government would have access to too much personal information.

The TSA says Secure Flight differs from the previous plan because it does not compare personal data with commercial databases.

The agency said, however, it will test the passenger information "on a very limited basis" against commercial data.

Under the current system, the government shares parts of the watchlists with airlines, which are responsible for making sure suspected terrorists don't get on planes.

Judge sides with Dems in the still-undecided Wash. governor's race

BY PEGGY ANDERSON

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Democratic Party volunteers are frantically calling voters whose provisional ballots are in dispute, urging them to make sure their vote is counted in the state's still-undecided governor's race.

The volunteers went to work Friday night after party officials successfully sued to get access to the names of 929 voters — in heavily Democratic King County — whose ballots were questionable.

They planned to keep working through the weekend.

Elections officials said there was no reason to release the names, because voters who cast provisional ballots in those ballots may need to be verified, and it's up to each voter to contact the county and make sure the vote was counted. Provisional ballots are used primarily when a voter is not at his home precinct or if registration is in question.

King County Superior Court Judge Dean S. Lun said it would burden the county little to release the names, and that state law favors openness in government. "No right is more precious than the right to vote," he said.

In tears after the ruling Friday, Democratic Party chairman Paul Berend said volunteers would work through the weekend to contact the voters.

"We're up to it," he said. "We've had hundreds of people volunteer to help."

Every vote is crucial in the state's tight race for governor.

Republican Dino Rossi was leading Democrat Christine Gregoire by about 2,000 votes Friday, with more than 50,000 still to be counted statewide.

Election results are scheduled to be certified Wednesday. The

See more nation stories on Page 23

county deadline for voters to resolve problems with their ballots is 4:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The Democrats' lawsuit was criticized by Republicans, who said it threatened to turn the close gubernatorial election into "another Florida."

"Why was this not a problem a week ago when Gregoire was ahead?" asked Pat Herbold, chairman of the King County Republican Party. "It would be wonderful if Christine Gregoire would step up to the plate like John Kerry did, for the good of our state, and say, 'We accept the results.'"


The county mails notices to voters when there are problems with absentee ballots — a missing signature or questions about registration, for example.

But those casting provisional ballots were required to call the county or get on its Web site to determine if their votes were in jeopardy. And the process was a lot more complicated for voters who failed to save the stub from their ballot envelope with the reference number needed for the county help line and Web site.

The provisional ballots were questioned for three primary reasons: the signature did not match registration records, there was no record that the voter was registered, or the voter had already mailed in an absentee ballot.

The only voter named as a plaintiff in the lawsuit, Aravind Swaminathan, went to the county offices Thursday and resolved the problem with his ballot, said county spokeswoman Bobbie Egan.

About 31,000 provisional ballots were cast in King County.



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IN THE WORLD

Life after Arafat: Palestinian election on horizon

Current prisoner Barghouti may run for president against interim leader Abbas

BY JAMIE TARABAY
The Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Palestinian officials began work Saturday on charting a future without Yasser Arafat, promising to hold elections by Jan. 9 to replace their deceased leader and expressing hope for new peace moves in the region.

In a decision that could signal the start of a spirited campaign, jailed Palestinian uprising leader Marwan Barghouti will run for the presidency of the Palestinian Authority in the elections, a person close to Barghouti said Saturday. Many analysts believe Barghouti would have the best chance of uniting disparate Palestinian factions, reining in violence and possibly restarting peace efforts with Israel.

However, Barghouti, who is serving multiple life terms in an Israeli prison after being convicted of involvement in attacks that killed four Israelis and a Greek monk.

Arafat's death Thursday raised speculation Israel might release Barghouti in a goodwill gesture, but Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom ruled that out.

"He will remain in prison for the rest of his life, because he's a mur-

derer, because he's responsible for the killing of so many" innocent people, Shalom said Thursday.

Arafat was buried Friday in the compound where he spent his last years as a virtual prisoner. He was seen off in a chaotic outpouring of grief as the man who embodied the Palestinian people's dream of statehood.

On Saturday, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia prayed at Arafat's marble and stone tomb with former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, the newly elected head of the PLO. The two men, who appear to be working out a split leadership arrangement, walked away from the tomb arm in arm.

Hours after the Palestinian leader was laid to rest, President Bush said he saw "a great chance" to create an independent Palestinian state. British Prime Minister Tony Blair joined Bush in pledging to mobilize global support for Middle East peace efforts.

French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier told Europe-1 radio Saturday that an independent Palestinian state should be created as soon as possible, even with "temporary" borders, and he called on the United States and Europe to work urgently toward brokering Middle East peace.

Qureia said the parties must follow through.

"I'm saying to the American administration, to President Bush, to the Israelis and to the whole world, 'Now is the period where we should be more serious,'" he said. "If we are determined to do it, we



Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qureia, left, and fellow PLO leader Mahmoud Abbas, arrive to pray at the grave of former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on Saturday at his compound in Ramallah.

can do it in a very short time."

A senior Palestinian aide, Yasser Abed Rabbo, said Saturday that Palestinian leaders were committed to holding a vote to replace Arafat within two months, as required by Palestinian law. Some officials had toyed with allowing parliament to choose a leader.

Bush said he hoped Arafat's successor would embrace the notion of a democratic state.

"I'd like to see it done in four years," Bush said, referring to the length of his second term. "I think it is possible."

Palestinian Cabinet Minister Saeb Erekat appealed to Bush to

"make sure we have free and fair presidential elections in 60 days."

"If elections are obstructed by Israeli occupation, this will be the path of more chaos," he said. "We have a historic moment, Mr. President. Seize it."

Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath welcomed Bush's "willingness to invest more time and more authority and more influence in getting this peace process back." He told reporters: "I don't think we need three or four years."

Shaath confirmed that Secretary of State Colin Powell will visit the region to meet with Palestinian leaders. He did not say when.

The election campaign likely will pit the young guard of the Palestinian activists, represented by Barghouti, against the older politicians, who likely will support Abbas, the interim leader.

Barghouti, a former West Bank leader of Arafat's Fatah movement, is popular among Palestinians, including Fatah's rank-and-file.

He once had close ties to Israeli peace activists, but after the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian fighting four years ago, he said force — including shooting attacks on Israelis — was justified to end Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Fire guts mosque in Netherlands

The Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — A mosque in the southeastern village of Helden, near the German border, was gutted by a pre-dawn fire early Saturday in what appeared to be the latest attack on an Islamic site since the killing of a Dutch filmmaker nearly two weeks ago.

There have been more than 20 incidents of fires or vandalism at Muslim buildings — and a handful of retaliatory attacks on Christian churches — since the Nov. 2 murder of Theo van Gogh by a suspected Muslim extremist.

It took firefighters around half an hour to extinguish the flames at the Helden Islamic Mosque Foundation. The building was damaged "both inside and out," police spokesman Peter Raaij said.

Police investigators suspect arson.

Mohamed elAmriti, chairman of the Muslim foundation, said he arrived for morning prayers and saw smoke. The fire coincided



The badly damaged interior of a mosque is seen after a fire Saturday in Helden, the Netherlands.

It was not clear if it had been set by arsonists. There have been many incidents of fires or vandalism at Muslim buildings since the Nov. 2 killing of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a suspected Muslim extremist.

AP

with the end of Ramadan when Muslims celebrate the Eid al-Fitr Islamic feast and the mosque would have been full.

"I opened the doors and minutes later it really started burning," he said in a telephone interview. "We are all shocked and everyone is very emotional. We have called everyone to remain calm, especially the youth."

The mosque's three prayer rooms, which would have been full minutes later for a Saturday service marking the end of the

Muslim fasting month Ramadan, were "completely destroyed and are now worthless," elAmriti said. As in earlier attacks, there were no injuries. An alternative site was made available to the village's Muslim community.

Two Islamic elementary schools were targeted last week, also in the south of the country. In the city of Eindhoven, a firebomb blew the front doors off a school. In Uden, another elementary school was seriously damaged by a fire that ripped through classrooms.

Militants say U.S. action delaying hostage release

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Taliban-linked militants threatening to kill three U.N. hostages accused the United States of hampering their release, though an Afghan official said Saturday a ransom demand was the main stumbling block.

Jaish-ul-Muslimeen or Army of Muslims, a spinoff of Afghanistan's former ruling militia, is publicly demanding the release of 26 Taliban suspects in exchange for the three foreign election workers, abducted more than two weeks ago.

The group says some of the men it wants freed are in American custody. But U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage opposed any concessions during a visit to Kabul earlier this week.

Mohammed Akbar Agha, the group's purported leader, said Armitage had dashed hopes the hostages could be freed before the Islamic feast of Eid al-Fitr, which began Saturday.

"The negotiators from the Afghan government contacted us

on Friday, and we discussed the whole situation," Agha told The Associated Press in a telephone call from an undisclosed location.

"We were hopeful that the issue would be resolved before Eid, but remarks by Richard Armitage caused some delay. We may take a final decision about their fate today."

Angelito Nayan of the Philippines, Annetta Flanagan of Northern Ireland and Shupe Hebl of Kosovo were seized at gunpoint Oct. 28 — the first abduction of foreigners in the capital since the Taliban was ousted three years ago by a U.S.-led invasion.

Jaish-ul-Muslimeen released a video of the three hostages, reinforcing fears that the little-known rebel group is imitating kidnappers in Iraq. But officials suspect that criminals or renegade militia forces also may have been involved.

The Afghan government and the United Nations have declined to detail their efforts to free the hostages, though one Afghan official told the AP on Saturday about the ransom demand.

Muslims prepare lavishly for end of Ramadan

BY ADNAN MALIK
The Associated Press

MANAMA, Bahrain — Worshippers in the Gulf region thronged to mosques at dawn Saturday and prepared lavish meals to welcome the start of the three-day Eid el-Fitr holiday that ends the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

The Eid — associated with fam-

ily gatherings over large, tasty meals and gifts for children — began in Saudi Arabia and most of the Gulf countries. Other Arab countries would celebrate the Eid on Sunday. Ramadan can last either 29 or 30 days, depending on when the first moon of the next lunar month is sighted, and the dates often differ from country to country.

In Saudi Arabia, worshippers

packed the holy mosques in Mecca and Medina for the Eid prayers. Later, families visited and feasted, starting with coffee and dates.

Abdulla al-Otaibi, 37, a Saudi professor, drove 310 miles to celebrate Eid with members of his family.

"I haven't slept yet and a lot of coffee and dates can keep you wired up for the day," said

al-Otaibi, who later feasted on camel meat at a town hall luncheon.

In the United Arab Emirates, official celebrations were called off as the country continued to mourn the death earlier this month of President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

The usual festivities associated with the holiday, including fireworks and parties held by fa-



A Palestinian boy wears a mask in celebration of the Muslim holiday Eid Al-Fitr as he carries a toy gun and an ice cream cone in the Shati refugee camp, northern Gaza Strip, on Saturday.

mous Arab singers, also were canceled.

Families, taking advantage of the three-day holiday and a marked improvement in the weather, gathered in parks with picnic baskets or visited shopping malls in Dubai, the country's commercial hub.

"I took the children out for a drive around the city and some shopping malls. We'll visit family next and gather for the Eid feast," said Ali Sultan, a 40-year-old Emirates civil servant, as he walked through a shopping mall with his wife and two children.

But socially, the celebrations are also officially muted as the king, Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, was not receiving well-wishers due to the mourning period for Sheikh Zayed.

Restaurants reopened for business during the day after a month-long restriction to open only in the evenings. During Ramadan, observant Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, sex and other worldly pleasures from dawn to dusk.

Sunni Muslims embraced after the morning prayers in celebration and later converged into family get-togethers over coffee and dates and later, large meals.

Beggars lined up outside Sunni mosques in Bahrain as the faithful emptied their pockets in charity. Groups of young children went around Sunni neighborhoods in the country knocking on doors asking for money.

The island's Shiite Muslims, who form a slight majority of the island's 400,000 citizens, were celebrating Eid a day later.

In Kuwait, children donned their new clothes and made the rounds to the houses of their grandparents, aunts and uncles, where wishes of happy Eid were accompanied by cash gifts. Parents later took their kids to amusement parks and toy stores where they can spend the money.

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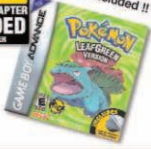
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School tax spat

CA LOS ANGELES — A lawyer for an Orthodox Jewish couple claimed Monday the Internal Revenue Service has unfairly refused to allow tax deductions for their children's religious schooling.

Michael and Marla Sklar claim that since Church of Scientology members are allowed to write off the cost of spiritual counseling sessions, they should be allowed to write off their children's Jewish school tuition.

The nonjury trial opened Monday in U.S. Tax Court before Judge John O. Colvin.

Security lawsuit

MA BOSTON — A civil rights group filed a lawsuit Wednesday challenging a controversial security system at Logan International Airport that allows police to stop and question people they believe demonstrate suspicious mannerisms.

Logan was the first airport in the country to launch new baggage screening practices at each terminal. In November 2002, it began the nation's first "behavioral recognition program," in which police stop and question passengers with odd or suspicious behavior.

The lawsuit, filed in Suffolk Superior Court by the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, comes three years after the Sept. 11 terror attacks were launched from Logan. Since then, the airport has won numerous accolades for overhauling its security system.

The process, based on a program at Israel's airports, trains police to look for behavior that is considered odd or suspicious. State police have insisted that they do not select people to question based on ethnicity or race.

Chipper accident

CA SAN JOSE — A man who worked for a tree service died Sunday after his leg was sucked into a wood chipper.

Miguel Marquez, 19, an employee of Arbor Science Inc. of San Jose, was working with a crew trimming trees when the accident occurred, said police spokeswoman Gina Teoport.

She said Marquez had apparently been trying to push some debris into the chipper with his left leg when the leg became stuck and was severed above the knee. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Pricey pooch missing

MN EDINA — Last week, Abby was just a precious family pet.

Today, she's the subject of a dog hunt involving two suburban police departments and a possible felony charge.

"She's the greatest dog in the world," said Steve Brehm, owner of the diminutive 7-year-old Cavalier King Charles spaniel that he and his wife, Gayle, believe was stolen from their front yard last week.

Two things make Abby's abduction file different: two witnesses to the apparent abduction and Abby's original price tag of \$1,650. Theft reaches the felony level if the goods — whether a snowblower or a schnauzer — are valued at \$500 or more.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Sea-dwelling surprise

GA SAVANNAH — Researchers working off coastal Georgia have discovered what could be three new species of bottom-dwelling creatures known as sea squirts.

The diminutive creatures — also known as tunicates — were recently found at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, a reef 17.5 miles east of Georgia's Sapelo Island.

Two of the sea squirts — one orange-colored with vein-like designs running through it and another spherical with evenly-spaced holes — are about four inches in size. The third is about the size of a grape.

Marine biologist Danny Gleason of Georgia Southern University made the discovery, along with four of his students, but has turned to a tunicate expert to help determine whether the animals are truly new to science.

Drug gang round-up

RI PROVIDENCE — A major drug trafficking operation by the capital city's largest and most organized gang has been broken up, law enforcement authorities said Wednesday.

Officials said 21 members of the Latin Kings street gang or their associates have been either arrested or indicted by a federal grand jury for their involvement in a drug traf-

ficking ring.

They said the arrests have weakened the Latin Kings in Rhode Island, which has more than 100 members in the state and has regrouped in the last three years.

The gang's leader, Joel Francisco, who went by the nickname Joe Crack, was charged in four indictments, including possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine. His girlfriend is accused of using her home as a stash house for the drugs.

Fatal prosthetic failure

UT MAGNA — An amputee whose artificial leg fell off as he crossed the street was struck and killed by a car as he crawled back to pick up the limb.

Motorists stopped to try to help Allen Coleman, 42, but could not reach him before he was run over along a dark stretch of highway Monday night, authorities said.

No charges were filed against the driver.

Statue procrastination

PA PHILADELPHIA — Some black leaders and scholars are accusing the National Park Service of dragging its feet on a congressional order to commemorate slaves kept by George Washington at the first presidential mansion.

Congress directed the park service two years ago to build a monument at the site, which is just steps from the Liberty Bell at Philadelphia's Independence National Historical Park, but it remains vacant and unacknowledged.

The commemoration would be the first federal memorial to slavery in the nation.

Escapee back in court

TN NASHVILLE — A prison inmate who escaped with help from a female prison guard and then fled the state will be tried in state court.

A federal charge of escape from custody against Edward McDaniel, 37, was dropped Tuesday, said Bret Hester, an assistant U.S. attorney in Nashville.

McDaniel has been moved to state custody. TBI spokeswoman Jennifer Johnson said.

McDaniel, who was serving a 20-year attempted-murder sentence for shooting a deputy in 1996, was discovered missing Oct. 3 from the DeBerry Special Needs Facility with a correctional officer, Vickie Sanford, 51.

The two were caught together five days later in a motel room in El Paso, Texas.

School stowaway

CO DENVER — A disabled boy who fell asleep on a school bus Tuesday morning was discovered more than an hour later, locked inside the bus parked at a district bus terminal.

The boy's mother, Nicol Castruita-Rodriguez, said her son, Alex, 9, a third-grader at Kaiser Elementary School, was fine. She was not.

"I was pretty hysterical," said Castruita-Rodriguez, who also said it's the second time her son has been lost on a school bus.

"They said they found my son still on the school bus," the mother said. "He was locked in the bus, standing at the back of the bus, not knowing where he was."



Having too much fun to be cold Gary Tekautz, 4, of Phoenix, Ariz., didn't let cold temperatures Wednesday interrupt his vacation. Tekautz, who was visiting relatives in Virginia, Minn., burred up enough to enjoy an afternoon at the Southside Park playground in Virginia.



Leaf play Jordan Stull, 8, right, and Abbi Chase, 7, play with leaves after school Thursday at the Roosevelt Elementary School playground in Ames, Iowa.



Store burns

Flint, Mich., firefighters watch Thursday night as smoke and steam rise from Savon Foods store in Flint, as a ladder truck pours water on it. The neighborhood grocery store was gutted by flames, stretching the city's fire department to the limit as it battled two fires on the same block.

Lightning sparks start of front thunder storms through the Fort Smith, Ark., area Wednesday.



Hospitality gone awry

FL ELLENTON — A motel manager was charged with holding a bus of Special Olympics athletes at gunpoint after a dispute about where the group should park.

John Embry, 47, was charged with aggravated assault and false imprisonment and was being held Sunday without bail, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office said.

Embry, manager of the Sleep Inn, held the bus at gunpoint for 10 minutes Friday because he did not want the bus parked in the motel's small lot, police said.

The competitors had returned to the hotel to change for a dance, dinner and awards ceremony. There were 19 athletes on board, ages 8 to 22, and nine adult chaperones.

"The vast majority of the athletes didn't know what was going on. The adult chaperones were more shaken up," said Amie Dugan, a spokeswoman for Special Olympics Florida.

Toddler finds drugs

WA UNIVERSITY PLACE — A 2-year-old girl picked up something at a local day care late last week — and it wasn't the flu.

The girl's mother told police she found a plastic bag filled with what appeared to be drugs inside her daughter's pocket after she picked her up from day care. The bag was folded inside a dollar bill, the woman said.

The girl told her mom she'd found the package on the living-room floor of the day care she attends in Tacoma, according to a police report.

Police seized the package. The substance inside tested positive for amphetamine, according to the report. No one was arrested.

Sites lined up for prison

NH BERLIN — The city has lined up three potential sites for a medium-security federal prison.

Two of the sites are on land owned by Hancock Timber Resource Group. The third site is on city-owned property off Route 110.

Now, Berlin officials hope to see the next stage of the process — an environmental assessment — get under way quickly. That process can take up to 24 months to complete.

Residents approved a referendum supporting a federal prison in Berlin in May 2002.

Dog is the hero

FL LARGO — The first time the dog jumped on his chest Tuesday, Joseph Favre tossed the tiny pooch across the room and went back to sleep.

But Gizmo would not give up. He jumped on Favre's chest again, barking and scratching at his face. Favre cocked his arm for another toss, then inhaled a nose full of smoke.

His mobile home was on fire, the kitchen engulfed in flames and smoke thickening across the living room ceiling.

With Gizmo at his feet, Favre made for the door, dashed outside and called 911. Within seconds, his Largo mobile home was awash in fire.

The blaze gutted the home and destroyed everything inside.

But Favre, who said he's a heavy sleeper, felt lucky to be alive and had Gizmo to thank for that.

"This is my hero right here," Favre, 28, said of the mix. "If the dog wouldn't have woken me up, I would have been crisp."

Legacy of hero lives on

NE OMAHA — The legacy of Korean War hero Edward "Babe" Gomez lives on in his native Omaha. Several hundred people attended a ceremony for an \$8 million school dedicated to Edward "Babe" Gomez Heritage Elementary School. The U.S. Marine saved his comrades in 1951 when he threw himself on a missile that was about to explode.

UCConn suspends frat

CT STORRS — The University of Connecticut suspended an on-campus fraternity for five years in the wake of an off-campus keg party. Eight people, including four fraternity members, were arrested after a party in September at a house rented by the school's chapter of Chi Phi.

Jury: No racial issue

TX DALLAS — A federal jury has acquitted a Dallas real estate worker of violating an Iranian-born taxi driver's civil rights during a scuffle at a fast-food restaurant in 2002.

The jury returned the verdict Wednesday after a three-day trial. "Everybody in the world could see I was not guilty," Curtis Murillo said in a story in Friday's editions of The Dallas Morning News.

Murillo was named in a federal indictment two years after a Dallas County grand jury decided to charge Murillo with aggravated assault in the scuffle with Fezollah Esmailli.

The men gave conflicting accounts of the scuffle, which began with Murillo honking his horn at Esmailli in a drive-through lane.

Both men accused the others of using bias-filled slurs. Murillo testified he hit Esmailli with a car jack only after Esmailli hit him with a fire extinguisher.

Jurors had to decide if Murillo was trying to deny Esmailli the right to eat in a restaurant because of his nationality.

New chunkin champ

MI HOWELL — A businessman's effort to defend his pumpkin-hurling title literally fell short.

Bruce Bradford and his nine-ton contraption held the World Championship Pumpkin Chunkin title for two years. But a rival's machine claimed the crown by shooting a gourd that soared 4,224 feet before a crowd of about 40,000 in Sussex County, Del.

Bradford's mechanical device finished second in the field of 100, sending an 8- to 10-pound pumpkin 4,056 feet across a farmer's field with a blast of compressed air.

"Well, we're first-place losers, so we're not too happy about that," Bradford, 57, owner of S&G Steel Erectors in Howell.

He even found a silver lining: Not having to lug home the trophy, which required a forklift to load it onto a trailer to bring it to the 18th annual competition.

"At least we don't have to haul that big ugly thing home," he said. "It's the ugliest trophy in the world," said Bradford, whose tournament record of 4,594 feet set in 2003 remained intact.

Stories and photos from wire reports

Just being a kid again

Olathe, Kansas, resident Michael Cook enjoys the unseasonably warm weather Tuesday evening while swinging at Oregon Trail Park in Olathe, Kan.



Tricky footing

Michael Markese, 7, makes his way through a funhouse Thursday at the Family Days carnival at Port Orange City Center in Port Orange, Fla.



A real banquet

A squirrel munches on a pumpkin, a remnant of Halloween, on Thursday in Kansas City, Mo.



Artistic ice

Ice crystals in a drainage ditch in Kragnes, Minn., formed overnight with a Thursday morning low of 17 degrees.

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Keep religion in church

I just finished reading the letter "Inspiration column good idea," (Nov. 10) and feel it's both a "duty and honor" to bring up a few points to the editor.

First of all, the content of North America was not founded on Christianity, the country of the United States of America was. Of course, that was after those fine country-founding Christians decided to main, slaughter and rape the peaceful earth- and spirit-worshipping natives who were labeled "savages" because they thought it might be nice to hold on to their motherland for a little while longer.

As I sit here in the middle of the desert fighting the same war that started hundreds of years ago by some other fine Christians (the Crusaders), I'd like to take a second to scoff at Christian ideals and arrogance.

Don't get me wrong. I fully support this operation in the name of democracy, but this fight started long before democracy was even thought of.

I'm also a spiritual man. I fully believe in God, our Father, the Creator. However, many people, like myself, strongly disagree with man-made religion, and the idea that man can presume to know the heart, mind and purpose of God.

I think it's beautiful that after years of rule by the major majority, America is finally starting to accept a more liberal frame of mind. A life without religious oppression. The freedom to think and do what you want, within the law, without being "banned at the stake."

I'm glad the letter writer has a purpose, his duty, but its place is in a church. I'd like to beg Stripes, please keep religion out of the paper.

Religion belongs in a church, or chapel, where those who feel they need it can get it 24/7.

Staff Sgt. Chad Rodriguez
Camp Buehring, Kuwait

Student-athletes deserve more

I am a high school student and a football player at H.H. Arnold High School in Wiesbaden, Germany. I read the 10-

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or fax and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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12-page sports section faithfully every day, and have come to think that only a very small portion of the section, a couple of days a week, is devoted to high school sports.

Those athletes, who put in 20-plus hours a week for their sports, deserve more than a small paragraph and a rare picture. And there is absolutely no coverage of junior varsity sports.

These articles and statistics are important to not only players and their families, but also to talent scouts and colleges looking for potential college athletes. Who is to say that the next Randy Moss or Peyton Manning isn't playing at the Department of Defense Dependents Schools institution right now?

Please include more features on high school sports in the sports section of Stars and Stripes. We would really appreciate it.

Thomas Lawler
Wiesbaden, Germany

More soccer, please

I am a middle school student at Wiesbaden Middle School also playing soccer. Whenever I read the Stars and Stripes newspaper, I go to the sports pages. I've noticed as I looked through the sports pages, it never mentions soccer. It's a

fairly big sport in the United States and it's the main sport of Europe, where I live.

Stars and Stripes should publish some articles on soccer because it would help America take in an international sport instead of giving our sports to the rest of the world. I would also like to know how the teams in the United States are doing.

I think the sports pages would get more attention if Stripes published soccer articles.

Josh Turner

Wiesbaden, Germany

Article cheapens paper

I find it difficult to believe that Stars and Stripes can't find anything better to print than an article about a Thai transvestite pageant ("First transvestite pageant crowns a queen," Nov. 9, Midwest edition). This paper is on the downward slide to becoming a joke.

Maj. Scott DeLorenzi
Misawa Air Base, Japan

Insurgents regrouping?

My husband is in Iraq participating with the Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I've been glued to my TV while the attack on Fallujah is taking place, as my husband could be involved. He is based at a forward operating base near Fallujah.

When I hear updates on the Fallujah attack going better than planned and our forces not coming up against much insurgent activity, it only gets me wondering about where the insurgents have gone. If they're not staying to fight for Fallujah, they have probably dispersed throughout Al Anbar province and made the capital of the province, Ramadi, all the more dangerous. I think that the insurgents are more intelligent than to stay in a city where all our forces are concentrated and they will recoil to a new city, such as Ramadi, and restart their fight there where there is military present — but they're not worried right now about that city.

Am I the only one who thinks this?

Alicia Linse
Plymouth, Ind.



OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other stateside syndicates.

Arafat's evil acts fill book Rocky Mountain News, Denver

On Sept. 9, 1993, Yasser Arafat signed a letter to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin pledging that the Palestine Liberation Organization "recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security." That was a lie, and it is one of many reasons the world should not mourn the passing of this petty tyrant....

The list of crimes the PLO chairman has initiated been associated with over the years would stain every page of a good-sized book. Highlights, however, would include the slaughter of athletes at the 1972 (Summer) Olympics by Black September, the assassination of U.S. diplomats in Sudan in 1973; the massacre of schoolchildren at Maalot, Israel, in 1974; a bus hijacking that killed 35 civilians in 1978; the slaying of Leon Klinghoffer on the Achille Lauro in 1985; the torture and execution of Palestinian dissidents, especially during the intifada of the late 1980s and early '90s; and the suicide bombings of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade in more recent years....

Arafat's death provides Palestinians with an opportunity to turn away from the violence of half a century to choose a more productive course.

Spend wisely, for our sake Bradenton (Fla.) Herald

President Bush certainly is entitled to "spend the political capital" he earned by winning reelection.... The big question is how much will his capital buy in what could be a contentious "marketplace," a Congress and nation sharply divided by war, social issues and fiscal policy.

Bush's tone and demeanor at this month's post-election news conference indicated he sees his victory as a mandate for a broad range of domestic reforms on which he campaigned. Certainly, compared to some elections in which the victor claimed a mandate by a far smaller margin — John F. Kennedy did so after beating Richard Nixon by two-fifths of 1 percent — Bush's 51 to 48 percent, 3.5 million-vote margin over John Kerry could empower the president to set ambitious goals for his second term.

Certainly the president is entitled to push the policies that he thinks are in the nation's best interests. But it would be a mistake to do so in a partisan, self-serving way. He pledged to work across party lines to help heal the rifts caused by the campaign.

If he breaks that pledge, he could find himself in the same failed second-term syndrome as some predecessors who overreached.

Bush indeed has political capital. We only hope he spends it wisely.

Fallujah will sort things out San Francisco Chronicle

The immediate military outcome of the offensive by U.S. soldiers and Marines against insurgents in control of Fallujah is hardly in doubt. Our troops, accompanied for symbolism by this rarity of newly trained Iraqi troops, will take charge of the city, notorious for the killings and dismemberment of four American contractors in March....

Fallujah officials are supported by the interim Iraqi government of Prime Minister Ayad Allawi in the hope that pacifying Fallujah will help the country to heal credible national elections in January. Yet questions remain about the likely success of this strategy.

Some in the minority Sunni community threaten to boycott the voting, while clerical leaders of the Shiite majority see it as their path to power....



United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan is not confident that Iraqi violence can be quelled sufficiently to create an effective election climate, or that a military offensive now will aid the democratic cause. He warned against launching the Fallujah offensive.

The Bush administration's policy for re-making Iraq faces hard testing in the next few months.

Killing critics is unacceptable Lebanon (Pa.) Daily News

Many Americans may have missed the story of how Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh was shot, had his throat cut and had a long jihadistic manifesto pinned to his flesh with a knife as he cried out for mercy. This happened in Amsterdam, the most pacific and tolerant of European capitals, in broad daylight, Nov. 2.

Van Gogh, the great-grandnephew of the famous artist Vincent, was a provocative satirist and social critic with secular postmodern liberal views. His film "Submission" features a woman in a see-through burka telling the story of an abusive and violent marriage from which her own family would not protect her for religious reasons.

The suspect in Van Gogh's death is a 26-year-old Moroccan immigrant who belonged to the same Islamist cult as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who directs the jihad in Iraq....

There can be no place in Western civilization for people who react to those who offend them by murdering them in cold blood or issuing religious edicts calling for their death....

Also deplorable is the apparent answering cry to Van Gogh's death: the bombing of an Islamic elementary school last Sunday. The bomb, whether by design or great good fortune, went off at 3:30 a.m. The most hopeful thing we could say is that the bombers were trying to send a message without sending blood into the gutters, but hate is hate, and crime is crime, and the bombing, like the murder, was both.

'Values' is a porous umbrella The Post-Standard, Syracuse, N.Y.

Morality may be the surprise issue of the 2004 campaign. But whose morality? According to exit-poll interviews, one-fifth of the voters cited "moral values" as their chief concern. Words like "morality," "faith" and

"family values" seemed to resonate as never before in the elections. And of those voters, 8 in 10 picked President Bush.

This doesn't mean challenger John Kerry is somehow less "moral" than Bush. The former altar boy who carried a rosary and Bible with him on the campaign trail has no less "faith" than the incumbent. So how come his "values" failed to impress all those American voters? ... If you don't happen to be an evangelical Christian; if your views of "morality" and "family values" don't include a ban on gay marriage or civil unions, outlawing abortion and embryonic stem-cell research; if you are uncomfortable erasing the line between church and state; this election provided only cold comfort.

Paying for combat gear Times Union, Albany, N.Y.

The Bush administration's latest appropriations request for the war in Iraq totaled \$70 billion, and that was only a stopgap measure in what is expected to be a long and costly American presence. Yet for all the money that Congress has so far approved, it comes as a jolt to be reminded of how ill-equipped many soldiers in Iraq are today.

How ill-equipped? Enough so that they and their families have had to dig into their own pockets to buy vital supplies to help them wage combat with insurgents — walkie-talkies, flashlights, gloves and bulletproof vests, even homemade armor for Humvees....

The support is heartening, but the fact that it is needed is disgraceful.... But what is worse is that the money to buy needed equipment was there all along. Only much of it was diverted by Congress to pay for pork items. Some examples of those projects, as revealed in a report on the Oct. 31 "60 Minutes" television program, include curtailing the brown snake in Hawaii, and maintaining a marching band on a closed military base.

It's all so outrageous. Why isn't the Pentagon resisting every attempt by Congress to siphon funds? More to the point, where is Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld? He should be using his office as a bully pulpit to expose the lawmakers who are taking money away from our troops. Why the silence?

Opportunity to help exists The Herald, Everett, Wash.

If people learned anything about George W. Bush in his first term, it's that he isn't

afraid to think big. Those who love him admire his zeal; those who loathe him are terrified by it.

The mild overtone he made to Democrats following his re-election this month hardly signaled a retreat from his aggressive style. It was an invitation to help him implement his party's goals, not an offer to compromise them. But even in that light, the president has a rare and real opportunity to forge consensus and make historic progress on some difficult, long-standing issues.

Two of them: Social Security reform and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Social Security, as Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has warned repeatedly, cannot in its current form support the impending retirement of 77 million baby boomers. Major changes must be made, and they'll be unpopular....

In the Middle East, the destruction of the war in Iraq kept the Israeli-Palestinian peace process on the back burner of U.S. foreign policy. Now, with a leadership change coming to the Palestinian Authority, the president should seize the moment and reassert traditional U.S. leadership [on the issue]....

Historic opportunities don't often intersect with a leader who has the vision and political capital to take advantage of them. We hope this president realizes that.

High hopes for Sen. Obama Daily Southtown, Tinley Park, Ill.

Voters in the Land of Lincoln are marching to the beat of a different drum than the rest of the United States.

Not only did Illinois voters give John Kerry a wide majority over President Bush, they also gave Barack Obama what may have been the largest victory margin ever in a U.S. Senate race.

For the second time in 12 years, Illinoisans elected an African-American to the U.S. Senate....

But remember, Obama becomes only the fifth African-American elected to the Senate in the history of the United States. [Carol Mosley Braun was the only black woman ever elected to the Senate. Illinois is proving to be a real land of opportunity for African-Americans, at least in the political world.]

Obama goes to Washington amid high expectations. His campaign theme of bridging political divisions might be just what his party needs after losing at least four seats Nov. 2 — including Minnesota Governor Tim Waskieleski of South Dakota.

YOUR MONEY

Why used cars can be better

BY DIANA MCCABE

The Orange County Register

A shiny, new car that comes with \$3,000 cash back sounds like a great deal, and it's one shoppers are seeing a lot of this fall.

But if you want to nab an even better bargain, consider buying used, experts say.

Wary shoppers might shy away from a used car because they're worried about getting a clunker. But buyers can protect themselves from such troubles. And there's no better time to buy used than now, thanks in part to the effect of new-car rebates on the used-car market.

"We've had these incredible incentives of \$4,000

to \$5,000 on some domestic (models)," said John Honiotes, vice president of dealer operations at Autobytel, an Irvine, Calif., company that uses the Internet to hook up dealers with car shoppers. As car buyers pay less, those rebates "erode the value of the vehicle and the future value as well," he said.

That's a benefit for used cars, too, because the value of used vehicles also drops, he said.

Philip Reed, consumer advice editor at Edmunds.com, who evaluates vehicles for shoppers, offers another compelling reason to consider a used car: You get more bang for your buck.

"New cars lose up to 20 percent of their value the minute you drive them off the lot," he said. After a year, some cars depreciate as much as 35 percent. "Let someone else take the hit in depreciation and then buy the car a year or two later," Reed said.

Many consumers, however, don't know where to start their search or what to look for in a used car.

So what's the single best way to buy used without sacrificing peace of mind? "Get a factory-certified vehicle," Honiotes of Autobytel advises.

These are the types of used cars you'll find when you visit a new-car dealership. Often called "pre-owned, factory-certified," these vehicles have the manufacturer's guarantee behind them. That means no matter where you go — from Orange County, Calif., to Chicago to New York — the warranty is honored.

Factory-certified cars often have the best cost criteria to get this backing from the manufacturer. Some manufacturers will only certify models five years

old or less, others six years. Mileage varies, too: One automaker might put the limit at cars with 50,000 miles, others 30,000.

These cars also are inspected, so you don't have to check them out with an independent mechanic. Inspections vary among manufacturers.

Some conduct a 140-point inspection, while others may offer a 128-point inspection. Typically, these inspections check things such as the depth of tire treads, brake pads and belt tensions. Consumers can ask to see the reports.

There are other types of certified cars, but experts say to be extra careful with these.

Some used-car

lots — which sell different kinds of preowned cars — also may offer a certification. But this certification isn't from the manufacturer. The car lot is backing it up.

"If it is a reputable company, you might be OK," Honiotes said.

Philip Reed

Edmunds.com editor

know the company, you're not taking a risk, he and others say.

Generally, consumers would take the vehicle back to the lot for service. And sometimes the warranty is very short — possibly just 30 days.

Consumers should get the certification in writing and understand what it covers before moving forward with the purchase, Honiotes said.

Buying a vehicle with any certification adds to the cost of the vehicle, from \$500 to \$1,000.

Consumers don't have to go to a new-car dealership or used-car lot to find a good bargain. Reed favors buying from a private party.

"It can be a kinder and gentler buying experience" when negotiating with an individual, Reed said.

For starters, the markup on the vehicle is usually a lot less than what consumers will find at dealerships or used-car lot, he said.

Professional salespeople look to make a profit, while individuals trying to sell a car on their own are usually trying to just get what the car is worth, Reed said.

"There's not as much game-playing in the negotiations," he said.

Still, consumers may still feel a bit worried about buying what some would consider a hand-me-down.

"Cars have never been more reliable. If you can find a one- or two-year-old car, there's still a lot of life left in it," Reed said.

SEE CARS ON PAGE 21



Surrounded by ingredients and finished products, 23-year-old Sarah Levy spreads dark chocolate out on a granite countertop for a candy she calls Dark Chocolate Delight in her parents' kitchen last month in Chicago. Levy, a former restaurant pastry chef, started her own business, "Sarah's Pastries & Candies Inc.," at her parents' home in March and started turning a profit last month.

The young and self-employed

Recent graduates find ways to be own boss

BY MARTHA IRVINE

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Sarah Levy loved being a restaurant pastry chef — but not the long hours, the relatively low pay, or the constant yelling that goes on in high-stress kitchens.

So this spring, the 23-year-old Chicagoan moved to a different kitchen — at her parents' home — and launched her own business, Sarah's Pastries & Candies Inc.

"I feel better when I'm working for myself and building a name for myself," says Levy, who started turning a profit last month.

She's one of the lucky ones: she got financial backing from her dad to help start the business. But she's not alone in her decision to strike out on her own. A number of young people are doing the same, driven by everything from a wish for more flexibility to a chance to test their own ideas.

A few recent college graduates, including 22-year-old Noah Thomas, say the tough job market they encountered last spring also motivated them to create their own options. Thomas, who lives in Columbia, S.C., and graduated from the University of South Carolina with a degree in marketing and finance, spent about three months looking for a job with no luck.

"Nothing was happening for me," Thomas says. "I didn't hear back from a lot of people — didn't even know what happened to my résumé."

So with a small amount of savings in his pocket, he started checking out less-expensive franchise options and bought into All About Honeybees, a travel business that specializes in trips for newlyweds. As his business is getting off the ground, he's also teaching an SAT prep course to supplement his income.

Nationwide, it's difficult to estimate the number of young small business owners: The federal Small Business Administration does not keep statistics by age.

But there are signs of growth. The Virginia-based Young Entrepreneurs' Organization — a group founded in 1987 that requires \$1 million in annual sales before it will admit a business owner — now counts 95 U.S. members younger than 30 in its ranks.

And a first-time survey done this year by the National Association for the Self-Employed found that about 15 percent of its members are in their 20s or early 30s.

Gene Fairbrother, a small business consultant at

the Texas-based nonprofit, says the percentage is significant because — even as recently as three years ago — young people rarely could for any sort of small-business advice.

"But not anymore," says Fairbrother, who believes cutbacks in some job sectors have played a role. He also credits the growing number of university programs that focus on entrepreneurship.

That doesn't mean that self-employment is for everyone, says Stacey Mayo, an Atlanta-based certified career coach. Some people, she says, start researching a business of interest only to realize that they'd rather fine-tune their current career than deal with the headaches of long hours and the tough decisions a boss has to make.

Still, "it's definitely worth exploring," she says. Even if self-employment is not a long-term endeavor, it can be a way to stay afloat during a job search. That's what 29-year-old Frank Strong learned after he got laid off from a startup public relations consulting firm in 2002.

"I resolved to learn what I could as a freelancer until the right opportunity came along," says Strong, who lives in Arlington, Va., and now has a full-time job with a business communications firm — much to his relief.

Regardless, Ana Sanchez, a graphic artist and recent art school graduate, says she'd still rather have flexibility than job security.

"Freelancing keeps me on my toes," the 22-year-old New Yorker says. "It forces me to do my best work because I know that my next job depends on my performance."

Conor McDonough agrees. He recently left the Web design job he got after graduating from Cornell University last year.

"I got dissatisfied with the rigid structure of the whole deal. There wasn't enough room for my own expression," he says.

McDonough now runs his own Web design firm, OffThePathMedia.com — mostly from his home base of New York. But he's found that having his own Web-based business has another advantage: He can do it from just about anywhere. That allowed him to travel to Boston on short notice to gather around a TV with friends as the Red Sox won the World Series.

"I'm definitely would not be possible if I worked for a big corporation," says McDonough who's able to make a living — and has hired some freelancers to help with some jobs.

To our readers

Ralph Nelson will return soon with Susie Besaw and his Money U. Column. Stay tuned.

Sunday Horoscope

Delightful Venus passes retrograde Pluto, which could affect our love lives like a mild electric shock — just enough to make us feel the need to reaffirm that we're with the right person, treating that person the right way, or doing the right thing to attract the right person. A scintillating idea about love is not solid enough yet, so get on it.

Holiday Mathis

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(November 14). Your command of your own behavior is impressive. When you tell yourself to do something, you do it — and that's what makes this year so remarkable. By next month, you'll have pulled a major goal to you. Concentrate on building a team and increasing your "fan base" in December. You'll need all the help you can get in busy January.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Friends have a way of getting under your skin — in fact, you'll contemplate going "screamo," but it's really not worth it. Cool off by engaging in activities that honor your fabulous sense of humor.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Very interesting because you're interested. It's your very attraction to someone that places you at the forefront of this person's mind. Though you're inclined to behave in the way that's expected of you, only so do it as it genuine.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

Putting yourself in the right environment is key to elevating your mood and getting you back in touch with humanity. Go where there's the potential to be rallied socially and spiritually. Pisces people can help.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Your sophisticated way of pulling people closer to you (and yet still keeping them at exactly the distance that makes you feel in charge) is most effective. It's one of the rare days you can play games and get away with it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

If you simply can't buckle down and get busy, then be mischievous and playful instead. Lightness and fluff are exactly what is needed to keep

spirits high for those around you. Look for the entertainment value in things.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

What's been gestating over a period of time is now ready to be born. But you still need to make space in your life for this new arrival. Ask for support in clearing out an area, both physically and mentally.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Someones close makes a plea for what's in his or her best interest — and not necessarily in yours. Luckily, you're wise enough to know the difference. Now, you've only got to be strong enough to do something about it!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

You hear (ad nauseam) about the amazing accomplishments of others. There's no need to compare yourself and no benefit to be had by doing so, either. You're in a league of your own.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Something happens that you can't control, and you'll be thankful for that! A Taurus who is on your side can help you see the opportunity in your situation. By nightfall, you'll find yourself smiling.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You're feeling smug, well dressed and up to some unusual antics. There's hardly anything more attractive than a rebel on a secret mission, which is why you'll have your choice of company.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You are both clever and maddeningly conservative. Friends try to persuade you into bad behavior but to no avail. Your independent streak is in full swing. No one can distract you from your focus on what needs to be accomplished.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Most people would find it difficult to balance 1.6 million things in their head at once, but you're not most people, and this is not like most days. Something creative and special comes out of this astounding mental activity.

Creators Syndicate

Be shipshape on directions

Why do sailors use the terms "port" and "starboard"? Why not just say "left" and "right" like the rest of us?

To those of us unfamiliar with nautical terminology, experienced sailors can seem to be speaking a different language, but words like "port" and "starboard" are not modern jargonists' inventions, created for the purpose of confounding landlubbers.

"Starboard," for example, can be traced to the Old English word "steorboard," which combines "steor," meaning "rudder" or "steering oar," and "board" meaning "ship's side." The word refers to the right side of a ship because of an early practice of steering by means of an oar held in the water

over the right side.

"Port" came about later (in the 17th century) as a replacement for "larboard," which sounded too similar to "starboard" when called out in command. The history of "port" is obscure. We don't know for sure if it evolved from the sense of "port" meaning "harbor or harbor town" or from the sense meaning "an opening in a vessel's side," but in either case we can speculate that early vessels with their steering apparatus on the right would have had reason to keep port to the left.

This column was prepared by the Editors of Webster's Concise Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Webster's may send questions to Reader-Service at Webster@csd.com, 47 Federal St., Springfield, Mass. 01102.

For online dating interest, women should look for best

Dear Abby: I joined an online dating service six months ago. Although my family disapproved, I researched my options and found a reputable company.

After two months of meeting numerous nice people whom I would consider friends, I met a really special guy. We have been talking on the phone and e-mailing for four months. We have never met, nor have we exchanged pictures. He wanted to get to know each other from the inside out first. He was finally decided to exchange pictures. I asked a friend to take my picture and was disappointed with the results. I know I could look better. She says I'm being overly critical and shallow, that if he had seen with the picture the I look just "OK," in his own right.

Shouldn't I attempt to send the best picture I can, even though he assures me that looks aren't everything? Don't I owe it to myself and to him to look good — not just "OK"?

Dear OK: But not Great in Idaho — Dear OK: Listen to your head and not your girlfriend.

Looks aren't everything, but they can't be ignored. Go to a professional photographer and have some pictures taken with

good lighting — both head shots and photos that show your figure. It's called putting your best foot forward. First impressions are important, so don't sell yourself short.

Dear Abby

Dear Abby: I am a freshman in high school. This guy I like is very sweet, but he's a girl friend. He likes me a lot, but he doesn't want anyone to be hurt so he's reluctant to break up with her. I told him I won't wait forever, and he told me he's trying to get her to break up with him.

He doesn't accept her calls, doesn't take her anywhere, and has asked his friends to tell her bad things about him. She refuses to get the message.

How can we get the point across to her without hurting her more than necessary? Did I mention that he's sweet, sensitive, caring and nice?

— In Love in Grand Rapids

Dear In Love: He may be sweet, sensitive, caring and cute, but the boy is also too immature to realize that his unwillingness to level with his girlfriend will hurt her more in the long run than telling her the truth. Unless he speaks up, the girl will continue to hang on because she has nothing to lose. The sooner she

hurts and heals, the sooner she can begin looking for someone who will truly care for her.

Now a word of caution to you: Watch carefully how he treats this girl, because chances are great that it's the way you will be treated one day.

Dear Abby: I am a nanny for twins who are now about six months old. I have a degree in education and specialize in preschool. Based on my experience with developmental milestones, it is quite obvious that one of the twins is hearing-impaired. I was hoping the pediatrician would notice it at their last physical, but that didn't happen. I don't know if it is my place to tell the mother, because I certainly wouldn't want her to feel judged, but I can't hear from the nanny. Should I let this go, or should I tell?

— Named in Ohio

Dear Nannifer: You should certainly tell the mother that you are concerned about the child, and why. Suggest that during the baby's next visit to the pediatrician she mention your observation to the doctor. You are a professional, and as such your expertise should be shared with your employer. It's the responsible thing to do.

Letters for this column — with names and phone numbers — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box #840, 1000 Locust St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19106. Please send your questions to Abby on the internet at <http://www.uspspress.com/dearabby> or by Press Syndicate.

Your wife needs to turn to therapy, not a different man

Dear Annie: I am 23 years old, married for four years and have a 19-month-old daughter. About a year ago, my husband, "Nathan," began treating me badly, calling me names, not helping around the house and not taking care of his daughter like he should. All he did was complain and sleep.

When Nathan's attitude went downhill, I turned to his best friend, "Carl." Now Carl and I have fallen in love, and we want to be together. Last weekend, he and I took a trip with my daughter. While we were away, Nathan bad-mouthed me to everyone in my family, and now they all hate me. They seem more concerned about his happiness than mine or my daughter's.

What about me being miserable for one year? They see my cheating, but not the way Nathan treated me.

— Unhappy in Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Unhappy: Oh, you don't get it. You're not unhappy because of a marriage is unsatisfying, the person you ask for help is a marriage counselor, not Carl. You may have had a bad reason to look elsewhere for emotional support, but it was wrong to seek comfort from another man. We also think you were being maliciously trying to punish Nathan by having an affair with his best friend.

Stop worrying about your family's opinions. You and Nathan married rather young, and you both were unprepared to deal with the realities of marriage and children. Please do not rush into another relationship. You owe it to your daughter to take the time to get it right.

Annie's Mailbox

Dear Annie: I am a 15-year-old girl in eighth grade. My mom comes home from work an hour later than I do. She leaves a list of chores.

At 15, I have over two hours of homework every night. When Mom comes home, she expects everything to be done. I explained that I can't handle all this and she thought she understood, but today she yelled at me because I wasn't changed out of my school uniform before dinner.

I have to practice my clarinet at least 20 minutes a day, and I'd love to have time to exercise or be with my friends, but forget it. I gave up TV long ago because my bedtime is at 8. I can never find time to get everything done. How am I supposed to juggle all these things?

— Overworked and Stressed

Dear Stressed: Let's see if we can find a solution, starting with your bedtime. You are in your parents' if you can move your bedtime to 9. Then ask them to

help you make a schedule. Show them how long it takes to do homework, but they should understand the restrictions. Add clarinet practice and then see what's left over.

You're not going to get out of the house without your friendship could cut back a little.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Speechless," who wondered how to tell her overworked friend "Bronze" that she isn't likely to attract good-looking men. In my college days, I was athletic and attractive. There was a moosey gal who never seemed to have a social life. I often shared with her my woes about my girlfriend. Over the years, our friendship deepened, and our group was shocked when Mousy and I became engaged.

For over three decades, this woman has been my best friend and cheerleader, and she still thrills me in the bedroom. I wonder where you stand. Our friendship deepened, and our group was shocked when Mousy and I became engaged.

— Someone's Prince Charming

Does, but it's possible your friend the kind of guy who is willing to look beyond the wrappings and see what's inside. You've given your friend a good example.

Creators Syndicate

Vixen star receives museum treatment

American icon Marilyn Monroe makes the ultimate debut in an exhibit that includes more than 200 photos

BY LARRY MCSHANE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — She was Playboy's first centerfold, and Joe DiMaggio's second wife. Marilyn Monroe possessed a knack for the big screen, particularly if there was a camera nearby — and it seemed there was always a camera nearby.

The actress turned enduring American icon was intoxicated by the pop of flashbulbs, during her too-short lifetime, she was photographed drinking and dining, smiling and sleeping, dressed and undressed.

The camera "was to her what water is to a fish," director Billy Wilder once said. "She exulted in it."

On Friday, more than 200 Monroe pictures from 39 photographers — including luminaries such as Richard Avedon, Gordon Parks, Robert Frank and Andy Warhol — appear at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in a new exhibit, "I Want to Be Loved by You: Photographs of Marilyn Monroe."

The photos "are timeless," said Marilyn Kushner, one of the exhibit's curators. "She died young, so she remains forever young. As time goes by, she looms larger and larger."

"Her relationship with the camera was the most important one she had. She saw the camera as a friend."

Marilyn Kushner
Exhibit curator

The exhibit traces the evolution of small-town girl Norma Jeane into sex goddess Marilyn. In a 1945 picture, the unknown 19-year-old stands alone on a Long Island beach, leaning undisturbed over an open parasol.

A decade later, a coy Monroe stands smiling on a Grand Central subway platform as a man to her left stares in bug-eyed disbelief.

The centerpiece of the collection, owned by Leon and Michaela Constantine, is a set of 59 Monroe pictures shot by photographer Bert Stern in the weeks before the actress' 1962 drug overdose.

"The Last Sitting" features an assortment of behind-the-scenes shots of Monroe, who sipped nine-year-old Dom Perignon to create a mood. The actress posed laughing, with a diamond necklace draped across her bare shoulders, and topos behind a

transparent scarf.

More than four decades later, her larger-than-life persona still emanates from each shot, setting the bar for subsequent "blonde bombshells" from Loni Anderson to Madonna to Pamela Anderson.

"Her relationship with the camera was the most important one she had," Kushner said of Monroe.

"She saw the camera as a friend."

The most enduring image of Monroe, her infamous photo op for "The Seven Year Itch," is well represented. There are 14 different shots of Monroe's white dress scandalously billowing above her waist as she stood over a Lexington Avenue subway grate.

An infuriated DiMaggio stormed off during the shoot, leaving Monroe alone. Another picture from the exhibit shows a sobbing Monroe leaving in a car after announcing her 1954 divorce from the Yankee Clipper.

Monroe's Playboy centerfold, shot by photographer Tom Kelly, holds a prominent position in the exhibit, with the naked actress seductively posed atop a blanket of red velvet. When a reporter asked Monroe what she had on during the shoot, she memorably replied, "I had the radio on."



AP photos

These photographs released by the Brooklyn Museum of Art, titled "Marilyn Monroe, 1953" are part of show opening at the museum Friday. The black and white photograph by Gene Korman is one of more than 200 Monroe pictures from 39 photographers.

There are dozens of other shots offering glimpses into the off-screen Monroe: Marilyn reading a book at home, shooting craps with director John Huston, slow-dancing with second husband Arthur Miller.

While photographers make up the bulk of the exhibit, the multi-media presentation offers other rarely seen glimpses of Monroe, from a 1950 commercial for Union Oil of California to her provocative serenade of President John F. Kennedy at his 45th

birthday in May 1962.

"I can now retire from politics after having had 'Happy Birthday' sung to me in such a sweet, wholesome way," Kennedy deadpanned. Within 18 months, neither he nor Monroe would be alive.

One of the most moving pictures doesn't feature Monroe at all.

Shot by Robert Frank in 1962, it shows a woman lying on a beach beneath an American flag. She's reading the Daily News, and the giant-type headline is clearly visible: "MARILYN DEAD."



Festival celebrating female filmmakers attracts stars

BY BEN DOBBIN
The Associated Press

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — A festival celebrating the accomplishments of women in filmmaking is drawing high-wattage stars like actress Joan Allen and director Mira Nair in the fourth year of its mission to become an East Coast niche in the movie industry.

The six-day High Falls Film Festival, which runs through Monday, is staged at theaters, cinemas and clubs around Rochester, the birthplace of motion-picture film and the hometown of women's rights crusader Susan B. Anthony.

The city's heritage makes it "just the perfect place in the world to have a festival that has programs for everybody but focuses on women," Hollywood producer Catherine Wyler, the festival's artistic director, said Thursday.

"It's not going to be a festival with a market like Sundance or Toronto. From the industry point of view, our goal is to become the East Coast home for women filmmakers. And every year as the word goes out from the women who come here ... we get known in wider and wider circles. That also helps us attract the celebrities."

The festival's high point will be Q&A sessions Saturday with Allen, a three-time supporting actress Oscar nominee for "Nixon," "Pleasantville" and "The Crucible," Sally Kellerman, who played "Hot Lips" Houlahan in the 1970 movie "M*A*S*H," and Nair, an Indian-born filmmaker whose movies include "Salaam Bombay!" and "Vanity Fair."

About 8,500 people were expected to attend the festival, up from 4,000 in its inaugural year in 2001. This year's 62 independent feature-length films and documentaries include "Proud," a story directed by Mary Pat Kelly — and being screened for the first time — about the all-black crew of a World War II destroyer escort.

While women are much more visible in filmmaking these days, they still have a lot of ground to make up, Wyler said, citing a decade of research by Martha Lauzen, a communications professor at San Diego State University.

Of the 250 top-grossing films in the United States last year, Lauzen found, only 17 percent of the producers, directors, writers, editors and cinematographers were women — the same percentage as in 1998.

"Getting into those big studio films, where the money is, that's really tough," Wyler said. "There are so many things we can do to help women in the business. We've really barely scratched the surface."

George Eastman, who founded Eastman Kodak Co., invented motion-picture film here in 1895 at a time when Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other noted suffragists in upstate New York were struggling for equal rights.

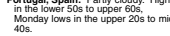
During Hollywood's silent-film era, many women had pivotal behind-the-scenes roles, said Wyler, producer of "Memphis Belle" and daughter of famed director William Wyler. In the 1930s, however, women were crowded out when "everybody realized 'Oh, this is really a commercially viable enterprise' and didn't begin to reappear in any numbers until the 1960s, she said.



Nair



Allen



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Curry says he wants to remain with Bulls

The Associated Press

DEERFIELD, Ill. — Eddy Curry might want to think twice before venting to his agents again.

Curry said Friday he wants to stay with his hometown Chicago Bulls, blaming his agents for turning his private complaints into a public demand for a trade and adding chaos to a team that already has more than enough.

"I'm not trying to go nowhere," Curry said after the Bulls' practice. "There's no way I want to leave Chicago, under no circumstances. Right now, I'm just trying to get all this past me and move forward."

The drama began Tuesday night with Curry's first game of the season. Despite losing more than 30 pounds over the summer and working hard on his game, Curry again looked lost. He didn't take a shot until the second quarter, didn't play in the fourth and finished with six rebounds and three points on 1-for-5 shooting.

Curry said he talked to agents, Darren White and Lamont Carter, after the game as he usually does.

"I just told them I was upset. That was just how I was feeling,"

NBA
briefs

Curry said. "I just was talking to them like I would anybody I felt was close to me. 'I'm frustrated and all of this,' and 'Losing and this and that and this and that.' I just didn't expect for it to get out."

He awoke Thursday to learn that White was asking the Bulls to trade their 7-foot center, drafted out of high school with Tyson Chandler in 2001 to be the cornerstones of the next dynasty.

Only White hadn't gone to Paxson with his trade demand. He'd gone to the Chicago Sun-Times.

"I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it," Curry said. "I definitely had a few choice words for them yesterday. I said it was something that was definitely out of order. ... I never meant for it to get out like that."

Robinson fails physical, to undergo surgery

NEW YORK — Free-agent forward Eddie Robinson failed a physical Friday with the New York Knicks, who were set to sign him to a \$1.3 million contract for the remainder of this season.

Robinson, who has a bone growth disorder in his toe, has decided to undergo surgery that will sideline him from six weeks to three months.

BY KEN PETERS

The Associated Press

CARSON, Calif. — The Kansas City Wizards and D.C. United plan to play the same scrappy style in the MLS championship game they used to get that far.

"This team has been counted out," Kansas City midfielder Diego Gutierrez said Tuesday. "But the team always had personality and character."

The Wizards overcame injuries, critics, and a tough playoff road to reach Sunday's MLS Cup.

Kansas City defeated the Los Angeles Galaxy in the Western Conference final after knocking off defending champion San Jose.

The Wizards advanced with a victory in the second game of the two-game, aggregate-goal series.

The Wizards are attempting to become the third MLS team to win the U.S. Open Cup and MLS Cup in one season.

"We had veterans and young players, and what we tried to do all year was to get points, get the home-field advantage, and to

walk off with two trophies at the end of the year," Gutierrez said.

United advanced to the MLS Cup with a 4-3 victory over New England that went to penalty kicks, and the victory wasn't secured until goalkeeper Nick Rimando stopped the Revolution's sixth kick.

D.C. players plan to deny the Wizards the second trophy.

"I had faith in this team," said Freddy Adu, the 15-year-old phenom who had five goals and three assists as a United rookie.

"We've done so well. It's been fun to watch us grow as a team. Now one more game that we hope to win."

To do so, they will have to slow a strong attack led by Josh Wolff and Darryl Arnaut.

Wolff had 10 goals and seven assists and Arnaut added nine goals and eight assists. Arnaut scored both goals in the clinching victory over Los Angeles.

"Both of them are very exciting-type players, very crisp, very sharp," United defender Ryan Nelsen said. "It's going to be a lot

of fun. We know we have to keep it very tough in the back."

"If we can keep it clean in the back, we have a very good chance of winning."

Jaime Moreno and Alecko Eskandarian spearhead United's offense. Moreno has seven goals and 14 assists, and Eskandarian 10 goals and two assists.

D.C. coach Peter Nowak, a player on the losing side when Kansas City defeated the Chicago Fire 1-0 in the 2000 MLS Cup, said his team will try to approach the game as business as usual.

"[They [the Wizards] have very good experience, a couple of guys who won the championship," Nowak said. "But we have to take care of ourselves first. We have to stick with our plan and find a way to win the Cup."

Kansas City coach Bob Gansler said his team has undergone a bit of an evolution in the way it's played this year.

"It's the guys on the field who prevail," Gansler said. "I don't think it has much to do with the guys biting their fingernails on the sidelines."

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Forget fast start; wings anxious to avoid a swoon

BY DAVE GOLDBERG
The Associated Press

After opening 5-1, the Minnesota Vikings have lost two straight, a scary portent for a team that won its first six a year ago, then lost seven of its last 10.

Especially scary because the Vikings go this week to Green Bay, which now trails them by only a game in the NFC North.

"It's a different type of team," coach Mike Tice says when the comparison is raised to previous slides by the Vikings. "I think this team has more character."

NFL picks

The Packers are favored by four points.

The teams have split the past two seasons, with Minnesota winning seven on opening day at Lambeau Field, not surprising for a team that tends to start fast.

Green Bay started slowly again this year, losing its first five including three home losses. The Packers now have won three straight and were off last week to heal their wounds, most notably quarterback Brett Favre's bruised thumb.

The Vikings, on the other hand, will be without Randy Moss again. After trying to play without the star hamstring in the two previous games, Moss missed Monday night's 31-28 loss in Indianapolis and will rest his leg again on Sunday.

Moss has been the difference in some big victories in Green Bay. Without him ... **PACKERS**, 27-21.

Cleveland (minus 3½) at **Cleveland**: The opening line on this game was 5½ and the early money on the Browns is a product of the obvious: a feeling the Steelers will let down after becoming the first NFL team ever with consecutive victories over unbeaten opponents this late in the season. Still, in a historic rivalry, save the laughter for later ... **STEELERS**, 21-10.

Philadelphia (minus 6½) at **Dallas** (Monday night): The Eagles' loss in Pittsburgh put southeast Pennsylvania and south Jersey into panic mode. Take a lesson from the Patriots ... **EAGLES**, 40-22.

Tampa Bay (plus 3½) at **Atlanta**: If anyone can challenge the Falcons in the NFC South, it's probably the Bucs, who have found more offense with Brian Griese at quarterback. The Falcons are rested, but haven't played very well at home ... **BUCS**, 17-16.

Seattle (plus 1½) at **St. Louis**: The Rams sent the Seahawks on a three-game skid when they met in Seattle. The Rams are skidding now ... **SEAHAWKS**, 31-30.



Daunte Culpepper will guide Minnesota's offense on Sunday at Green Bay's Lambeau Field.

Buffalo (plus 8) at **New England**: In winning 22 of their past 23, the Patriots have won only twice by more than 14 points. One was last week and one was 31-0 in this game last season ... **PATRIOTS**, 27-20.

Baltimore (minus 1½) at **New York Jets**: Quincy Carter, who replaces injured Chad Pennington, will need his mobility against the Ravens' defense ... **RAVENS**, 17-9.

Chicago (off) at **Tennessee**: The off is for Steve McNair's bruised chest. With a week off, he should play and do better than Kurt Warner did against the Bears last week ... **TITANS**, 20-8.

Houston (plus 9½) at **Indianapolis**: Indianapolis doesn't stop anyone well enough to win by 9½ ... **COLTS**, 31-26.

Detroit (plus 3) at **Jacksonville**: Tough to figure with Leftwich out ... **JAGUARS**, 9-7.

Kansas City (minus 4½) at **New Orleans**: Talk about no defense ... **RED SKINS**, 20-13.

New York Giants (minus 2½) at **Arizona**: The Cardinals are decent at home. No Strahan for the Giants ... **CHIEFS**, 45-42.

Cincinnati (plus 3) at **Washington**: Clinton Portis might not throw this week, but he should run forever against the Bengals' defense ... **RED SKINS**, 20-13.

Carolina (plus 1) at **San Francisco**: Kattawill will put up points ... **49ERS**, 30-26.

Week 7: 7-7 (spread), 84-6 (straight up).

Falcons' Vick prefers to forget first two games against Bucs

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Two years ago, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers were on their way to the Super Bowl and Michael Vick looked lost.

The Bucs knocked him out of one game. The next time around, they just knocked him around. For one of the few times in his career, the Atlanta Falcons quarterback went up against a defense that made him look downright ordinary.

"It's been so long," Vick said, his memory getting conveniently fuzzy. "I can't remember what happened in those games. But I know that back then, their defense was aggressive. The front four was part of the reason that I struggled against them."

Times have changed. The Bucs (3-5) are struggling to get back in the playoff race after losing their first four games, a carryover from last season when they followed up their Super Bowl championship by missing the playoffs.

The Falcons (6-2) have a three-game lead in the NFC South, and they can deliver a crushing blow to Tampa Bay when the division rivals meet Sunday at the Georgia Dome.

"It is a huge game for us," Bucs quarterback Brian Griese said, "and we are going to treat it that way."

"The Bucs have been able to do a better job than most teams at containing Vick, who really struggled when he went against a Warren Sapp-led defense in 2002.

In the first meeting, Vick completed just four of 12 passes for 37



yards in a 20-6 loss. He was sacked three times, managed only a yard rushing and wasn't even around at the end, leaving with a sprained shoulder after being driven into the turf by Simeon Rice.

The Falcons then put together an eight-game unbeaten streak, setting up a rematch in Tampa Bay. Vick vowed to have his best game of the season, but he passed for just 125 yards and ran for only 15 in an even-worse defeat, 34-10.

"I was young then," Vick said. "I've grown up a lot. Any threat they pose, I don't think it's anything that I can't handle."

Last season, Vick came back from a broken leg late in the year and guided the Falcons to a 30-28 upset in Tampa Bay, eliminating the Bucs from the playoff race. He wasn't spectacular, but he threw two touchdown passes in a most satisfying victory.

"It was big," Vick said. "But he's a tough place to go to play. It was a tough call at the time when they needed a win and they were trying to make it to the playoffs. We really didn't have too much going for us."

Steeling: T.B. Farrior quiet leader of NFL's second-ranked defense

STEELING, FROM BACK PAGE

A week later, Farrior had two sacks and three forced fumbles — a half-season's work for some linebackers — and his punishing hit in Cowboys quarterback Vinny Testaverde caused a game-turning fumble in the fourth quarter.

Farrior had the two most important defensive plays Sunday as the Steelers manhandled the Eagles 27-3, a 41-yard interception return and a head-on sack of running back Brian Westbrook for a 2-yard loss on the third-and-2 screen pass.

"He's been making a lot of plays like that, and he's gotten better with every game," defensive coordinator Dick LeBeau said.

"He's definitely one of our leaders."

With Porter and Foote both off pro-talkers and the reved-up Haggans always in motion, Farrior said somebody must be the guy to mop up what may be the NFL's best group of linebackers. It's one that figures to get even better now that 2001 Defensive

Rookie of the Year Kendall Bell is playing again after missing seven games with shoulder and groin injuries.

"I'm the guy who keeps everyone together," said Farrior, who has two interceptions, three forced fumbles, three fumble recoveries and three sacks. "I'm like the head of the group. I try to keep everyone focused on the task at hand, even though sometimes it's difficult because they're all doing their own thing."

To Farrior, the time between plays can be just as entertaining as a sack on third down.

"Oh, yeah, we all love working with each other," said Farrior, a psychology major at Virginia. "We play off each other and pretty much know what each other's going to do. Larry [the defensive coordinator] has always surprised you. I thought Joey talked the most trash, but Larry's passed Joey 10 times over. Anything is liable to come out of his mouth."

"Clark? He's a high-energy guy. His top speed is always running 100 miles per hour. He's always flying around doing something. Even if he's wrong, he's flying."

Vick doesn't have to worry about Sapp anymore — he's now in Oakland — but the Bucs still have players such as Rice and Derrick Brooks who know a thing or two about keeping Atlanta's quarterback in line.

"I think we pursue better than most defenses," cornerback Brian Kelly said. "You're not going to say that one guy is going to bring this guy down. You take all 11 guys and pursue."

Tampa Bay's playoff hopes are nearly as smothered as they were when they faced the Falcons last December. At least the Bucs have rebounded from their miserable start, a turnaround that began when Griese began taking the snaps.

Since moving in for Chris Simms, who replaced Brad Johnson, Griese has completed 69 percent of his passes with six touchdowns and one interception.

The mood of the team has changed, too. With eight games to go, the Bucs believe they have found the quarterback who can lead them back into the playoff race.

"It is just the nature of the beast," Griese said. "When you start to get on a roll and start to have some positive momentum, it makes it a lot easier to come in here and put the hard work in that it takes to continue on that roll."

The Falcons started the season on a roll, winning their first four games for only the second time in franchise history. They endured a humiliating loss at Kansas City, giving up an NFL-record eight TD rushing, but bounced back with an impressive 41-28 upset in Denver.

A Steelers defense enjoying a turnaround season has done little wrong, ranking No. 2 overall, No. 1 against the run, No. 5 in scoring and No. 6 against the pass. The last two weeks, Pittsburgh limited the previously unbeaten Patriots and Eagles to a combined 28 yards rushing, even though Pro Bowl nose tackle Casey Hampton — the primary run stopper — went down with a season-ending knee injury Oct. 17.

The biggest difference in Pittsburgh's defense is the return of the disruption-causing pressure created by LeBeau's zone blitzes.

With any or all of the four linebackers liable to blitz, the Steelers are causing numerous breakdowns that have enabled Farrior to keep making plays.

We trust and believe in him, and he's been the best defensive coordinator in the league," Farrior said of LeBeau, who returned this season after 1992-96. "We all know he's the best defense guy in the league. It's his job that he's going to put us in good situations. All we have to do is make the plays."

Forbes: NHL overstated financial losses

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NHL suffered less than half the losses it has claimed the past two years, according to a report in Forbes Magazine.

In an article in its Nov. 29 edition, the business magazine — which did not have access to all of the 30 teams' financial records — estimates the NHL lost a combined \$96 million last season, not \$24 million as reported by the league.

For the 2002-03 season, in which the NHL stated losses of \$273 million, Forbes estimates they were actually about \$123 million.

The discrepancy occurred because several NHL teams aren't accounting for all their revenue. Forbes reported. The magazine said the NHL included only half of the \$17 million the New York Islanders got last year for cable broadcasts, for example.

William Wirtz, who owns the Chicago Blackhawks, also owns half of the United Center, where the team plays. Forbes said that the arena's 212 suites pulled in \$15 million last season, money that wasn't included in the league's numbers. The United Center is a separate corporate entity from the Blackhawks, the magazine reported.

"The Forbes article is factually

Sports briefs

inaccurate in numerous respects and is not based on any of the actual information that would be needed to support its claims," Bill Daly, the NHL's chief legal officer, told The Canadian Press on Friday. "It is nothing short of irresponsible journalism."

The great losses are why the NHL is shut down now by a lockout, imposed by Commissioner Gary Bettman in September following the expiration of the collective bargaining agreement with the players association. Through Friday, 2002 regular-season games and the All-Star Game were called off.

The NHL stands by its numbers, pointing to the league-commissioned audit by former Securities & Exchange Commission Chairman Arthur Levitt. Levitt's study found NHL clubs lost \$273 million in 2002-03.

Crew's Fraser, Rapids' Cannon among those honored by MLS

CARSON, Calif. — Robin Fraser of the Columbus Crew was selected Friday as Major League Soccer's top defender of 2004, and Joe Cannon of the Colorado Rapids was chosen as the league's top goalkeeper.

Other award winners announced were rookie of the year Clint Dempsey of the New England Revolution and comeback player of the year Brian Ching of the San Jose Earthquakes.

Greg Andrusis, who guided Columbus to a 12-5-13 record that included a league-record 18-match unbeaten streak to finish the regular season, was chosen as coach of the year.

The 37-year-old Fraser, who won the defender honor in 1999 with Los Angeles, helped Columbus finish second in the league in goals allowed with 32. The Crew also recorded 10 shutouts.

Cannon was the lone goalkeeper in the league to play every minute this season. He made 150 saves in the regular season, had an 80.2 saves percentage, and logged 10 shutouts.

Diaz leads LPGA's Tournament of Champions

MOBILE, Ala. — Laura Diaz is too busy trying to win the Tournament of Champions to worry about qualifying for the season-ending event.

Diaz took the second-round lead Friday in the Tournament of Champions, shooting a 5-under 67 to put herself into the position to advance to the ADT Championship next week with a top-30 spot on the money list. She entered the

week 36th, \$33,923 behind No. 30 Stacy Prammanasudh, who is not playing in the Tournament of Champions.

"I'm trying my hardest not to think about that," Diaz said. "I'm just trying to play the best golf I can, and if I play well and get to play next week, then great. It's an honor to be in the top 30 and play in that great tournament. My goal is to make the Hall of Fame and you do that by winning tournaments. I'm trying to keep it all in perspective. I've got a lot more holes to make birdies."

Diaz closed with three birdies to finish two rounds with an 11-under 133 total on Magnolia Grove's Crossings Course.

Former Yale coach Heather Daly-Donofrio (66) was two strokes back, and Lorena Ochoa (68) and Christina Kim (70) were three shots behind.

Leonard, Flesch team takes lead in Franklin Templeton

NAPLES, Fla. — Justin Leonard and Steve Flesch combined for a 9-and-63 and a one-stroke lead over Hank Kuehne and Jeff Sluman on Friday after the first round of the Franklin Templeton Shootout.

Greg Norman and Scott McCarron had a 7-under 65 in the modified alternate-shot format, tied with John Daly and Rory Sabbatini.



Anastasia Myskina, above, defeated top-seeded Lindsay Davenport 7-6 (5), 6-4 in the WTA Championships in Los Angeles on Friday.

Davenport upset by Myskina

Mauresmo still has chance to reclaim No. 1

BY BETH HARRIS
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — French Open champion Anastasia Myskina upset Lindsay Davenport 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 in the WTA Championships on Friday night, which could jeopardize the American's hold on the No. 1 ranking.

Davenport owns a 351-point lead over No. 2 Amelie Mauresmo, who still has a chance to regain the top spot she held for five weeks after the U.S. Open. Davenport needed to reach Monday night's final to guarantee she would end the year at No. 1 for the third time in her career.

"If I finish the year two, it's been a great year," said Davenport, who owns a tour-leading seven titles this year. "If I finish one, great. If she plays well here and wins it, she absolutely deserves it."

Mauresmo beat U.S. Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 6-2 for the fourth time this year and still has a chance to take away Davenport's ranking despite never winning a Grand Slam title.

Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova eliminated Vera Zvonareva with a 6-4, 7-5 victory. Playing in the tournament for the first time, Zvonareva finished last in her four WTA group with an 0-3 record.

Sharapova improved to 2-0 and has yet to drop a set.

"I got my whole game together," she said. "When you have some confidence, if you're down a break point, you can still come back."

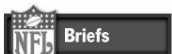
She was to play Mauresmo, also 2-0, on Saturday, although both women already have qualified for the semifinals.

Warren warned over Roethlisberger comments

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The NFL warned Cleveland Browns defensive tackle Gerard Warren for comments he made about trying to hit Pittsburgh quarterback Ben Roethlisberger in the head during Sunday's game.

"We notified the team, including Gerard Warren, that if a play-



er commits a flagrant foul after making such a statement, it may be a decisive factor supporting the suspension of the player, depending on the entire set of circumstances," NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said.

Warren told reporters Thursday that the Browns needed to rattle Roethlisberger.

"One rule they used to tell me: Kill the head and the body's dead," Warren said.

He said if the Browns can shake the confidence of Pittsburgh's rookie, they might be able to stun the Steelers.

"I didn't say knock him out of the game, I said just go across his head a time or two," said Warren, who was fined \$35,000 in his rookie

season for a cheap shot on former Jacksonville quarterback Mark Brunell.

Asked if Warren's history factored into the warning, Aiello said: "It's standard procedure if comments of that nature are made."

On Friday, Warren said he was not speaking for the Cleveland organization.

"People might have taken it in the wrong sense," he said.

"That's just me and explaining the way I approach football. I play it on a violent level and it's a violent game."

Warren, who has battled injuries, has just six tackles and two sacks in four games this season.

Steelers running back Stanley remains questionable

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh Steelers running back Duane Stanley missed practice for the third

straight day Friday with a sore hamstring and remains questionable for Sunday's game in Cleveland.

Stanley was coming off four 100-yard games in a five-game span before missing last Sunday's 22-17 victory over the Browns with the same injury. Jerome Bettis replaced Stanley and ran for 149 yards on 33 carries — his most productive game in three seasons.

Verron Haynes, who often replaces Stanley on third downs, was held out again Friday with a turf toe. Haynes is listed as doubtful. Rookie free agent Willie Parker is expected to step in if Haynes can't play.

Fullback Dan Kreider remains questionable with a hip flexor injury, but practiced Friday for the first time this week.

Panthers RB Davis to miss Sunday's game

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Carolina Panthers running back Stephen Davis will not play Sunday against the San Francisco 49ers with swelling in his knee keeping him out of his seventh game this season.

In another blow to the Panthers' running game, Davis' primary backup, rookie Joey Harris, pulled a hamstring in practice Friday and also is questionable for the game.

Davis ran for a career-high 144 yards in 2003, but has carried just 24 times for 92 yards this season.

Panthers head coach John Fox wouldn't say Friday who will start if Harris doesn't play, but fullbacks Brad Hoover and Nick Goings probably will split the load.

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Patient Syracuse zoned in against Princeton

The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — When Syracuse won the 2003 national championship, the Orange flustered every opponent in the NCAA tournament with coach Jim Boheim's favorite weapon — his 2-3 zone defense.

But much has changed for the Orange, and Princeton found that out Friday night in Syracuse's 56-45 victory in the second round of the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic.

After racing to a nine-point lead against Syracuse's man defense, the Tigers (1-1) struggled to get their motion offense to work after No. 6 Syracuse (2-0) switched to the zone.

"We did a very poor job on our man-to-man," Boheim said. "We felt all along we would play some zone but felt we could not get by a little longer than we did. As it was, we waited too long."

The Tigers went 6-for-9 and reeled off a 14-2 spurt while the Orange hit just two of 11 shots. Scott Greenman's three-point play gave Princeton a 14-5 lead despite two shot-clock violations.

Enter the zone, exit the Tigers. Princeton finished the game 15-for-38, shooting just 39 percent in the second half. And after Max Schaefer's three-pointer tied it 40-40 with 8:41 left, the Tigers managed only five free throws the remainder of the game.

"We just about put ourselves in position to have a chance to win the game," first-year Princeton coach Joe Scott said.

"Syracuse couldn't guard us man-to-man, but they have something to go on. Really is their staple. I don't know if there's another team in America that could have done that to us."

Hakim Warrick had 20 points for Syracuse, which advanced to the semifinals at Madison Square Garden on Thursday night against No. 12 Mississippi State.

Princeton, which beat Bucknell 61-48 in the first round, held its own against the Orange until the closing minutes. Syracuse led 28-22 at halftime and built a 34-24 lead on a three-point play by Warwick with 17:13 remaining.



Syracuse's Josh Pace, left, battles Princeton's Luke Owings for a loose ball Friday night.

The Tigers rallied, but it was a struggle. They needed 10 passes to set up Luke Owings' layup that tied it 37-37.

"We keyed in on defense," said Terrence Roberts, who had eight points and six rebounds for the Orange despite a sore left knee. "That was the main thing. We knew we had to be mentally prepared to play defense."

Will Venable led the Tigers with 17 points and six rebounds and Jordan Wallace had 11 points. Demetris Nichols had 14 points for the Orange.

In the first round, the Orange hit nine of their first 10 shots, jumped to a 24-0 lead and beat Northern Colorado 104-54. It wasn't so easy against the Tigers.

"We had to match their physical aggression, and I think we did a pretty good job of that," said Venable, who was 5-for-5 from the floor, hit all six of his free throws, and

led the Tigers with six rebounds. "It's a tough matchup with Syracuse. They're big and long and strong. It was a challenge."

Mississippi State 55, Birmingham-Southern 48: At Birmingham, Ala., 12th-ranked Mississippi State struggled offensively in their second game without preseason All-America Lawrence Roberts, but still managed to earn a trip to New York for next week's semifinals and finals.

Roberts, who said he expects to play against Syracuse, missed a 33-49 victory over Fairfield on Thursday night as he served a one-game suspension from the NCAA over expenses he received to attend a tryout before the NBA Draft. The 6-foot-10 senior didn't play against Birmingham-Southern because of a broken nose suffered last week in practice.

Winsome Frazier led the Bulldogs

against Birmingham-Southern (1-1), scoring 18 points, including Mississippi State's last 10 of the game.

In other games Friday:

Saint Mary's 61, California 52: At Berkeley, Calif., E.J. Rowland had 17 points and 12 rebounds as Saint Mary's advanced to the Coaches vs. Cancer semifinals next Thursday at Madison Square Garden against the winner of the Memphis game. George Mason and No. 24 Memphis play Saturday night.

Jonathan Sanders had 17 points and eight rebounds and Brett Collins added 15 points for the Gaels (2-0).

The Gaels came out in a scrappy man-to-man defense to fluster and outshine the sloppy Bears (1-1). Saint Mary's converted 22 of 26 free throws — 10-of-12 by Rowland — shot 41 percent and held a 38-32 rebounding edge.

Marquise Kathy led Cal with 24 points and seven rebounds.

New Mexico 75 North Carolina A&T 59: At Albuquerque, David Chioti and Danny Granger each scored 18 points and New Mexico overcame 19 turnovers to win its opener in the NABC Classic.

New Mexico broke the game open in the first eight minutes of the second half. The Aggies got a free throw from guard Sean Booker in the opening minutes, then went scoreless for the next 7:43. The drought ended with a turnaround jumper by Jeff Alvis with 12:17 left in the game, but by then the Lobos were up 48-34.

Chioti and Granger dominated the smaller Aggies inside. Chioti was 8-for-9 and Granger was 5-for-8.

Booker led the Aggies with 18 points, 15 in the first half.

Santa Clara 74, Duquesne 65: At Albuquerque, Doran Perkins scored 24 points and Tristan Parham had 10 points and 11 rebounds. Santa Clara opened the season with a victory in the NABC Classic.

The Broncos posted a 13-4 lead and stayed in control the rest of the way. Jack Higgins led Duquesne with 15 points.

The Dukes twice got within five points in the second half, the latter at 75-65 after two free throws by Kieron Achara with 1:06 left. Kyle Bailey hit four free throws in the final 57 seconds for Santa Clara.

With meetings over, GMs now look to make deals

BY BEN WALKER

The Associated Press

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla. — Joe Garagiola Jr. packed up, set to head home and ready to deal with Randy Johnson. The Arizona general manager figures to be real busy in the near future.

He's hardly alone. After five days of discussion, debate and a final South Beach birthday bash, the GM meetings broke up. Now the real business begins.

Starting Friday, teams could talk money with any free agent.

There's also a better chance clubs can complete the trades they talked about this week. The New York Mets huddled with the Chicago Cubs for two straight days, with speculation that slugger Sammy Sosa might be headed to New York.

The New York Yankees plan to be prime players in the winter market. They met on on getting Johnson last summer, and may take another run at the Arizona ace.



Johnson and the Diamondbacks aren't exactly a great match anymore. The 2001 World Series co-MVP with Curt Schilling, the Big Unit spent this year with a team that lost 111 games. He's due \$16 million next year, and a trade could help Arizona cut its payroll.

"If this process were to begin, it would end with Randy," Garagiola said. "He is a 10-and-5 player, he has a no-trade clause. No one is in more control of his situation than Randy."

Garagiola hopes to meet with the 41-year-old Johnson next week to reach some sort of understanding.

Carlos Beltran, Adrian Beltré, Carlos Delgado, Nomar Garciaparra and Troy Percival were some of the available free agents,

with Roger Clemens one of the last to file.

"I heard some very serious things today that made me think there are going to be some clubs that are going to be very aggressive in the free-agent process," said agent Scott Boras, who represents Beltran and Beltré.

Still, many players will wait until mid-December or later to sign.

"They want to hear from all parties sometimes before they make a decision," Boras said.

Reliever Doug Brocail became the first of the 76 free agents to sign, returning to the Texas Rangers for a \$1 million, one-year deal Friday. And among players eligible for arbitration, Cincinnati catcher Jason LaRue agreed to a \$3 million, one-year contract.

Pedro Martinez, Jason Varitek and Derek Lowe were among 16 members of the World Series champion Boston Red Sox to file for free agency. Boston GM Theo Epstein did not seem too concerned about so many unsigned players.

"It's part of the natural process," he said.

Besides, do not look for the stats-oriented Epstein to be overly sentimental when deciding who to bring back to Boston.

Such a coolly efficient approach has done well for a couple of GMs who have achieved long-term success: John Schuerholz led pitchers Tom Glavine and Greg Maddux leave Atlanta, and Brian Cashman parted ways with popular Yankees Andy Pettitte and Tim Lincecum.

That could mean Pedro Martinez will be playing somewhere else next season, with Carl Pavano taking his place in the Red Sox rotation.

Born and raised in Connecticut, Pavano was drafted by Boston in 1994, then traded in a package to Montreal for Martinez after the 1997 season.

At 28, Pavano went 18-8 for Florida and may now be beyond the Marlins' financial means. Pavano's agent, Scott Shapiro, met with a bunch of teams this week

at the oceanfront hotel where the GMs stayed, including Boston, the Yankees, Seattle, Baltimore and Detroit.

"I think it's 18 teams that have shown interest," Shapiro said.

New York also is looking at a recent 10th-round pick, San Diego GM Kevin Towers' 43rd birthday.

While they figure to spend another offseason fighting for players, Cashman and Epstein were on the same side Thursday night.

They were among several general managers celebrating with a New Year's party on San Diego GM Kevin Towers' 43rd birthday.

A day after the GMs split 15-15 on a vote to further consider the use of instant relief, the meetings ended with a briefing from MLB security head Kevin Hallinan on a disturbing topic: issues relating to kidnapping in foreign countries.

"Sad to say, but it's something you have to be aware of," Hallinan said.

Boston pitcher Ugueth Urbina's mother was kidnapped in Venezuela on Sept. 1 by armed men and has not been released.

Rainout puts Busch on pole

The Associated Press

DARLINGTON, S.C. — The contenders for the Nextel Cup championship moved to the front of the field without turning a lap Friday at Darlington Raceway.

Rain washed out qualifying for the Southern 500, forcing NASCAR to set the grid for Sunday's race by car owner points. That put Kurt Busch, Jeff Gordon, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Jimmie Johnson and Mark Martin — separated by just 104 points — at the front of the 43-car field.

"That was a heck of a lap for us today," said Busch, who hasn't started from the pole since the season finale at Homestead in 2002. "It was a real good break for us."

Busch leads Gordon by just 41 points with two races remaining in the 10-man, 104-race season for the Cup playoff-style championship. Starting from the front gives Busch an edge in the race for the five-point bonus awarded to any driver leading a lap as well as the five points that go to the car which leads the last laps.

"It's definitely a great opportunity for us," Busch said. "But having all of the drivers in the Chase lined up front, everybody's going to want to lead a lap quickly."

"But we'll all live up to the gentleman's agreement and all file into the first turn single file and let the how things shake out and who has the best setup and can get the advantage."

Gordon, a four-time series champion and six-time Darlington winner, said he won't be too disappointed at the start.

"It's really risk versus gain," he said. "If it's not a super risky move to do it, I'd love to have those five bonus points."

"I'll have more other guys around me who want those points. If it looks too nice, I'll let them go. I want to win the race."

Even though he has had considerable success on the narrow 1.366-mile oval — nicknamed the "Track Too Tough to Tame" — Gordon doesn't believe he has an advantage.

"Everything is unpredictable right now," he said. "You can get

Mountain Dew 500

Qualifying rained out; race Sunday
Field set by owners points.
At Darlington Raceway

Darlington, S.C.
Lap length: 1.366 miles
(Car number in parentheses)

- (97) Kurt Busch, Ford
- (24) Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet
- (18) Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet
- (44) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet
- (5) Mark Martin, Ford
- (20) Tony Stewart, Chevrolet
- (12) Ryan Newman, Dodge
- (38) Elliott Sauter, Ford
- (17) Matt Kenseth, Ford
- (10) Jeremy Mayfield, Dodge
- (42) Jamie McMurray, Dodge
- (28) Dale Jarrett, Ford
- (33) Casey Mears, Dodge
- (14) Kevin Harvick, Chevrolet
- (29) Bobby Labonte, Chevrolet
- (2) Rusty Wallace, Dodge
- (15) Michael Waltrip, Chevrolet
- (8) Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet
- (16) Greg Biffle, Ford
- (40) Sterling Marlin, Dodge
- (21) Scott Wimmer, Dodge
- (41) Casey Mears, Dodge
- (31) Robby Gordon, Chevrolet
- (84) Casey Mears, Dodge
- (25) Terry Labonte, Chevrolet
- (31) Rusty Wallace, Dodge
- (27) Brian Vickers, Chevrolet
- (10) Scott Wimmer, Dodge
- (77) Brendan Gaughan, Chevrolet
- (30) Scott Riggs, Dodge
- (2) Rusty Wallace, Dodge
- (48) Ken Schrader, Dodge
- (45) Kyle Petty, Dodge
- (52) Bobby Hamilton Jr., Chevrolet
- (72) Kirk Sheldermine, Ford
- (7) Mike Wallace, Chevrolet
- (50) Todd Bodine, Ford
- (98) Randy LaRose, Ford
- (89) Morgan Shepherd, Dodge
- (20) Elliott Sauter, Dodge
- (49) Johnny Sauter, Dodge
- (26) Mario Imhoff, Ford
- Failed to qualify**
- (43) Kevin Lesage, Dodge
- (44) Derrick Cope, Ford
- (10) Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet
- (14) John Andretti, Ford
- (86) Travis Kvapil, Dodge

in trouble without really trying at this point. You're going to have to race smart here. It will be interesting to see who stays smart and doesn't make the big mistake here."

The Cup drivers did get a chance to practice earlier Friday, and Earnhardt made a mistake during the session that could have hurt his race. He hit the wall between Turns 1 and 2 hard enough to knock his breath out for a few minutes.

His team quickly brought out a backup car and Earnhardt was able to get in a few laps before the practice ended.

"I don't really know what happened," he said. "I just ran out of racetrack, got a little out of the groove and ran up into the fence. The consolation is that it hap-

pened early enough that I did get some laps in the backup car."

Because the crash took place before the scheduled qualifying, Earnhardt will not have to start from the rear of the field despite moving to a backup car.

"Obviously, it's a break to start up front," he said. "But, one way or another, it would be just fine. It's such a long race, in 40 or 50 laps everybody will be somewhere else anyway. But I'd like to make the best of the opportunity and keep track position all day."

It is the closest five-way title competition in NASCAR history.

"For all of us, it's the most intense championship battle I've ever seen," Gordon said. "All of us have a little bit of edginess knowing that every lap is so crucial. These last two races are going to be really interesting and fun."

Rain erased Ryan Newman's chance to win a fifth straight pole and 10th of the season.

Busch qualifying, truck race rained out at Darlington

DARLINGTON, S.C. — Busch Series points leader Martin Truex Jr. will start up front after rain washed out qualifying Friday for the Bi-Lo 200.

The cars were lined up based on owner's points for Saturday's race at Darlington Raceway. Kyle Busch, 161 points behind Truex in second, will start second. Greg Biffle, Kevin Harvick and Justin Labonte round out the top five.

With a gain of 30 points Saturday, Truex can clinch his first Busch championship if car owner Dale Earnhardt Jr. Truex would be the first rookie to win the Busch title since his car owner did it in 1998.

Rain also forced postponement Friday of the NASCAR truck series race, which was to be the first under the lights at Darlington Raceway.

The race will be held Saturday. Carl Edwards starts on the pole with Shane Hmiel right behind. Series points leader Bobby Hamilton was fifth in the starting grid.

its two Nextel Cup dates for the 2005 schedule.

"The bottom line is decisions have to be made for the better of the sport," Gordon said. "The history of a racetrack can only take you so far."

Next season, a race at Texas Motor Speedway will replace Darlington in the final stretch.

Cale Yarborough has also won five Southern 500s. Gordon is also third on the track's career victories list with six behind Dale Pearson (10) and the late Dale Earnhardt (9).

Beyond his personal success, though, Gordon thinks Darlington belongs in NASCAR's 10-race championship chase. "But then I'd want to see a road course in there, too," he said.

Gordon, who won the last of his four NASCAR titles in 2001, is second in this year's championship chase, 41 points behind Kurt Busch with the season's final races here and next week at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

Auto Racing Roundup



Fresno State tailback Bryson Sumlin breaks an 89-yard run during Friday's 70-14 victory over Hawaii. Sumlin rushed for 220 yards and three touchdowns and the Bulldogs amassed 679 yards.

Fresno St. flattens defenseless Hawaii

The Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. — Bryson Sumlin rushed for 220 yards and three touchdowns, and Wendell Mathis added 176 yards and three scores in Fresno State's 70-14 victory over Hawaii on Friday night.

Paul Pneger, Matt Rivera and Robbie Dubois also scored rushing TDs for the Bulldogs (6-3, 3-3 WAC), who set a school record with 503 rushing yards. Fresno State became bowl-eligible with its third straight victory, humiliating its unfriendly conference rivals with 679 yards of offense.

For Hawaii's beleaguered defense, it started ugly and never got pretty. The Bulldogs scored on seven of their first eight possessions to take a 49-0 halftime lead.

NCAA career passing leader Timmy Chang was 26-for-43 for 167 yards and a touchdown for the Warriors (4-5, 4-4), and receiver Chad Owens became Hawaii's career leader in all-purpose yards. It wasn't nearly enough to counteract the Bulldogs' running game.

Fresno State led 35-0 early in the second quarter, eclipsing its previous season high in rushing yards 12 minutes before halftime.

Sumlin and Pneger passed for 160 of his 176 yards before halftime and rushed for a 1-yard score.

Hawaii's defense has been a season-long disaster, ranking near the bottom of the NCAA in several categories. But the Bulldogs took the Warriors to a new low. Boise State had 589 yards in Hawaii's 69-3 loss two weeks ago.

But Fresno State had 512 at halftime, delighting the large crowd at chilly Bulldog Stadium.

The Bulldogs sent headed to a bowl game for the sixth straight year, perhaps the Emerald Bowl in San Francisco, if the Pac-10 can't qualify the requisite number of teams for bowl berths.

College roundup

In Friday's other game:

Memphis 30, Southern Mississippi 26: DeAngelo Williams rushed for 199 yards and keyed a second-half comeback with two touchdowns to help host Memphis become bowl-eligible for the second straight season.

The Tigers (6-3, 3-3 Conference USA) snapped a two-game losing streak. It was the second straight loss for Southern Miss (5-3, 4-2).

Memphis trailed 26-14 before Williams scored on 4- and 75-yard runs late in the third quarter to give the Tigers the lead.

Stephen Gostkowski, who struggled against winds approaching 20 mph, connected on a 31-yard field goal with 6.51 remaining for Memphis' final points.

Golden Eagles quarterback Dustin Almond struggled, completing nine of 20 passes. One of those completions was to Antwan Courington for a 16-yard yardage to give the Golden Eagles a 12-7 halftime lead.



Memphis tailback DeAngelo Williams ran for 199 yards on Friday.

Gordon will miss fall race at Darlington

By PETE IACOBELLI

The Associated Press

DARLINGTON, S.C. — Jeff Gordon wishes the Nextel Cup's championship chase would go through Darlington Raceway for years to come — for himself and the sport.

Gordon has won a record-tying five Southern 500s at Darlington.

The 55th and final Southern 500 will be run Sunday.

"On a personal level, I think it's a mistake because we run good at this track," Gordon said. "But if you can't pick this track up and get it in New York City or L.A. or Texas or Miami, then we'd be racing here."

Gordon says Darlington's historic, tricky 1.366-mile oval is one of the most difficult on the circuit and a challenge drivers battling for a Nextel Cup should have to face. However, Darlington's small capacity of about 60,000 plus its so-so attendance records in the face of bigger, newer layouts throughout the country are reasons it still one of

Jeff Gordon

SPORTS



Sixers' Iverson adds buzzer-beater to résumé in overtime victory over Pacers, Page 26



San Diego Chargers QB Doug Flutie (7) is stopped by Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker James Farrior on Dec. 21, 2003, in Pittsburgh. Farrior's name seldom comes up in any discussion concerning the NFL's premier defensive player, but coaches are noticing his hard-nosed play.

Steeling the spotlight

Pittsburgh LB Farrior quietly drawing notice around NFL

BY ALAN ROBINSON
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH

On a Pittsburgh Steelers defense filled with big hitters and big talkers, inside linebacker James Farrior sometimes gets overlooked because he's the one making the least amount of noise.

But Farrior doesn't care if he is heard, as long as he is seen.

The Steelers (7-1) are the biggest surprise in the NFL this season, bouncing back from a 6-10 record in 2003 to match the best record after eight games in franchise history and stamp themselves as a Super Bowl contender.

Farrior has been no surprise to those who watched him during five productive seasons with the Jets from 1997-2001, when he was among the NFL's leading tacklers. He has been just as productive and as con-

sistent in Pittsburgh, but is getting recognized only now because of the big plays he regularly makes.

Maybe he's not a big-name defensive player like Jevon Kearse, but plenty of people have noticed him.

"Farrior is having an outstanding year," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said. "I don't know how many fumbles he has caused and recovered, but it is probably more than anybody else in football that I have seen."

Every week, Farrior seems to do something new, something important, something bigger than in the previous game.

Against Cleveland on Oct. 10, Farrior and linebackers Larry Foote, Joey Porter and Clark Haggans were in quarterback Jeff Garcia's face so often he began shedding the ball even before they arrived. Afterward, coach Butch Davis called Garcia "skittish."

SEE STEELING ON PAGE 28



Falcons' Vick hoping to be on more solid footing against Bucs' defense this time

Page 28



Fresno State runs up nearly 700 yards, rolls over Hawaii

Page 31



Wizards, United set to square off in MLS Cup

Page 27

Did NHL exaggerate its financial woes before locking out players? Page 29